

# ECCLESIASTES

A NEW TRANSLATION

by the

REV JOHN NOBLE COLEMAN

—♦—  
SECOND EDITION



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J. H. Moore.

- 1<sup>st</sup> 4.44,

With the author's affectionate regards,  
27 September 1867.

# ECCELESIASTES

A NEW TRANSLATION

WITH NOTES EXPLANATORY, ILLUSTRATIVE, AND CRITICAL.



# ECCLSIASTES

## A NEW TRANSLATION

WITH NOTES EXPLANATORY, ILLUSTRATIVE,  
AND CRITICAL.

SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND ENLARGED

BY THE

REV. JOHN NOBLE COLEMAN, M.A.

LATE INCUMBENT OF VENTNOR.

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To the Memory of

MARGARETTA ELEONORA MARELLA COLEMAN

A BELOVED WIFE

TRANSLATED FROM THE CONFLICTS OF TIME

TO THE GLORIES OF IMMORTALITY

THIS VOLUME

IS MOURNFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY THE AUTHOR.



## PREFACE.

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### THE INSPIRATION OF ECCLESIASTES.

CHRISTIANITY receives as Divine the canon of the Old Testament transmitted by the Jews, the only nation of all the peoples of the earth chosen of old by God to be the depository of His revealed will, and acknowledges both this canon of the Old Testament and the New Testament Scriptures to be God's Word written, to which Word man must not add, and from which Word man must not subtract. The Jews divide the Old Testament into three parts, the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa. Christ Himself recognised this threefold division of the Old Testament, and declared that all three parts were prophetic of Him (Luke xxiv. 44). Being prophetic of Christ, all three parts must have emanated from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The book called ECCLESIASTES is embodied in the Hagiographa, and therefore constitutes an integral portion of Divine revelation,—of 'all Scripture given by inspiration of God, profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'

### THE AUTHOR OF ECCLESIASTES.

The authorship of Ecclesiastes is explicitly ascribed by inspiration unto Solomon. 'The words of Khoheleth, son of David, reigning

in Jerusalem : I am Khobelet, reigning over Israel in Jerusalem.' No other son of David but Solomon ever reigned in Jerusalem over Israel. Furthermore, the author's ascription to himself of pre-eminence of wisdom—

‘ I, behold, I have increased and advanced wisdom  
Beyond all who have been in Jerusalem before me ;’

of pre-eminence of architectural erections and wealth—

‘ I erected works of magnificence ; . . .  
More magnificent was I and more opulent  
Than all who have been in Jerusalem before me ;’

and of pre-eminence in the composition of proverbs—

‘ He had pondered, and investigated, and arranged many proverbs,’ demonstratively proves that Solomon is the sole and exclusive author of Ecclesiastes.

Hence to affirm, in opposition to the consent of antiquity, as Grotius and very many modern writers have affirmed, that Ecclesiastes was written in whole or in part by some other author, and not by Solomon, is to contradict the teaching of Omniscience, and virtually to deny the inspiration of this book. If we admit the inspiration of Ecclesiastes, we must, as the necessary consequent, admit that Solomon was the author. No diversity of style, real or imaginary, can justify or even palliate man's presumptuous contradiction of God's revealed will. ‘ God is not a man that He should lie.’ ‘ Let God be true, and every man a liar.’ The inspiration and Solomonic authorship of Ecclesiastes are indissolubly linked, and must stand or fall together. Incontrovertible is the judgment of the renowned Professor of Divinity, the learned Witsius, that the author of Ecclesiastes, if not Solomon himself, was the greatest liar that ever disgraced humanity, —*omnium mortalium mendacissimus*.

As inspiration authoritatively declares that Solomon was the author of Ecclesiastes, so inspiration clearly indicates that he wrote it on the very verge of life, not long before he entered the dark valley of the shadow of death, after he had amassed his immense wealth, had completed the magnificent temple and all his splendid edifices,

his extensive parks, gardens, and plantations, his utilitarian reservoirs for the supply of Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and his plantations with water, and had experimentally learned that ‘vanity of vanities, all is vanity,’—that nothing can satisfy the soul of man, or impart abiding felicity, but saving faith in the promised Seed of the woman, who by covenant engagement was to bruise the serpent’s head.

In our authorized version Solomon is called THE PREACHER, the suppositions meaning affixed to the Hebrew word KHOHELETH both in the English and in the ancient versions. The root and derivatives of this word occur 170 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, and in no one passage ever signify TO PREACH OR TO TEACH, nor are they ever so rendered in the authorized English version, except in the seven texts in Ecclesiastes, where KHOHELETH occurs in the Hebrew original. The sole signification of the term in all the other passages, except these seven texts, is TO GATHER OR CONVENE ASSEMBLIES. Solomon was not A PREACHER, nor yet a CONVENER OF ASSEMBLIES. But the whole tenor of this book demonstrates his contrition and penitence. His decease at the early age of fifty-eight, possibly somewhat earlier, after he had reigned forty years, proves the premature decay of his constitution. Josephus represents Solomon to have been only fourteen years of age when he began to reign. If he reigned forty years, he must have died at the early age of fifty-four, according to this statement. The reader is referred to the Critical Appendix for a justification of the rendering of the term KHOHELETH adopted throughout this volume.

Much may be alleged in vindication of the authors of our English version. They were not at full liberty in all things to follow their own judgment, being under restrictions in several respects to adopt pre-existing translations. The authority of the ancient versions was in their days over-estimated. The Rabbinical Hebrew punctuation was then considered an integral part of the original text, though systematically excluded from all synagogue rolls of the Pentateuch and Esther, and extant on no one Hebrew coin (see Madden’s *History of the Jewish Coinage*), and in no Samaritan manuscript. The defects of the Received Texts of the Old and New Testaments had not then been proved by the collations of Kennicott and De Rossi, nor by the



discrepancies now known to exist between uncial and cursive manuscripts. The importance of the Arabic and other Semitic languages to illustrate the Old Testament was then very imperfectly understood. The Lexicons of Castell, Meninski, Golius, Richardson, Willmet, and Freytag, and the grammars of Erpenius and Baron de Sacy, and many others, had not then been published. The exegetical writings of Schultens, Reiske, Michaelis, Lee, Dathe, and Rosenmüller, and other critics, were posterior to their time. And the Arabic Syntax, which defines the form of, and stamps significancy on, the word **KHOHELETH**, was then almost unknown in Europe. But that any one in the present day, when such a flood of light has been poured upon Scripture, should now represent Solomon to have been a **PREACHER**, does seem passing strange.

Whoever now advocates that **KHOHELETH** should be rendered **PREACHER** should adduce some one text where the word in any of its forms bears this acceptation, and should show **WHEN** and **WHERE** Solomon ever **PREACHED**. If it be said that Solomon preached by his writings, we reply, that Solomon so preached in common with all the other writers of Scripture, and that this cannot be the meaning of **KHOHELETH**, which is a distinctive term, predicated by Solomon of himself, and pre-eminently significant of him as contradistinguished from others. Any rendering of the word **KHOHELETH** which represents Solomon to have been a **PREACHER** or a **CONVENER OF ASSEMBLIES**, is, in the author's judgment, alike contradictory to historic verity and to common sense.

The inspiration of Ecclesiastes proves that Solomon was the author of this book. The authorship of Ecclesiastes proves the salvation of Solomon, and rectifies the misconception of fathers, rabbis, Abulpharagius, and many other writers, ancient and modern, who have either doubted or denied that he was a sinner saved. Can any instance be adduced of any writer of any book of the Old or New Testament having failed of salvation? Jehovah employs worldly men to effect His providential designs, but has exclusively raised up men of God to write as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Who shall dare affirm that Solomon is the solitary exception to this rule?

The three books of Proverbs, Canticles, and Ecclesiastes, and the penitential contents of the latter book, indisputably prove that Solomon's apostasy was pardoned, that he was possessed of genuine repentance and saving faith, and that at death he entered into that rest which remaineth to the people of God.

#### THE TEACHING OF ECCLESIASTES.

This book, by the plural noun **THE MOST HIGH ONES** (chapter v. verse 8), and by the plural noun **CREATORS** (chapter xii. verse 1), teaches a plurality of persons in the Godhead, in antagonism to Jewish and Mohammedan monotheism, and in accordance with the ancient creed : 'Hear, O Israel, Jehovah thy Gods are one Jehovah.'

This book teaches the sovereignty of God in grace and providence, controlling, directing, and regulating all hearts and all events to fulfil His prophetic will, and to work together for good to them who love Him, and are the called according to His purpose.

This book teaches that death is a final separation of the dead from the living, until death itself shall be swallowed up in victory—that the dead have no cognizance of human affairs—that the dead return not to the living. This teaching sheds some light on the theory of admonitory and premonitory dreams and apparitions. Dreams and spectral apparitions, when divinely sent, are essentially distinct from erratic phantasies of the mind during sleep. Nevertheless they are not emanations from the dead, but are mysterious manifestations of the Divine will, veiled in impenetrable mystery, until the saints in plenitude of glory and knowledge shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever. Solomon, in this didactic poem, speaks only of common dreams, or the erratic phantasies of the mind during sleep. Divine dreams were communicated by God under the old dispensation, and will be renewed to God's children as premonitory signs of the second Advent, when the prophecy of Joel shall be fulfilled, and God's servants shall see visions and dream dreams. See statement of eight remarkable dreams in note on chapter ix. 5, 6.

This book exhibits prophetic portraitures of the regal fatuity of

Rehoboam, of the transient popularity of Jeroboam, of the fickleness of the ten tribes, and of the entire extirpation, root and branch, of the posterity of Jeroboam, who himself perished death-stricken by God. The Chaldee thus paraphrases the first two verses of Ecclesiastes : ‘ The words of prophecy, which Khohleth, that is Solomon, son of David, the King, who was in Jerusalem, prophesied. When Solomon King of Israel foresaw by the spirit of prophecy that the kingdom of Rehoboam his son would be divided with Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and that Jerusalem and the holy Temple would be destroyed, and that the people of the children of Israel would go into captivity, he spake according to this word : “ This world is vanity of vanities. All wherein I have laboured, and wherein my father David hath laboured, is vanity of vanities. It is altogether vanity.” ’

This book authoritatively declares the paramount supremacy of God’s Word written over all the writings of man, its procession from the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, its inspiration by the eternal Spirit, its design to make wise to salvation, and its infallibility, constituting it a perfect standard, whereby all human books should be tested, and according to agreement or disagreement with which all human opinions should be summarily accepted or rejected.

This book recommends to God’s children contentment, placidity of mind, and cheerful enjoyment of those temporal blessings which Providence hath conferred upon each. The wise king was no misanthropist, no cynic, no ascetic. Even when his soul was humbled in the dust from contemplation of the apostasy of which he had been guilty, and heart and flesh were failing, he admonishes each believer to rejoice before God in the station, and rank, and circumstances of life wherein the providence of God has placed him. As Solomon in this poem forecasts the future, and manifests inspired prescience of Rehoboam, Jeroboam, and the ten tribes, may not this commendation of matrimony and social enjoyment be referred to the Divine prescience and condemnation of Papal Rome’s forbidding to marry, and of the unutterable cruelties and impurities of monasticism ? May not this commendation have been designed to be a salutary warning against brotherhoods and sisterhoods, modern revivals of mediæval obliquities ?



The sum and substance of this book is, that vanity is inscribed on all sublunary pursuits and concerns, and that there is nothing in the world worth living for but Christ and His salvation. The faith of Solomon was faith in the predicted Messiah, ‘the son of David, the son of Abraham.’ The hope of Solomon was anticipation of Messiah’s redemption, ‘mighty to save.’ The object of Solomon in writing Ecclesiastes was, that this book, as well as the Mosaic Law, might be a pedagogue or scholastic conductor unto Christ, the great Prophet of the Church, so that every reader, savingly profiting thereby, might attain to the full assurance of faith, hope, and understanding, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

Every attentive reader must be struck by the absence of all condemnation of idolatry, and indeed of all reference thereto, throughout the Book of Ecclesiastes from the beginning to the end, remembering that Solomon was guilty of sanctioning by his presence, and by the erection of idolatrous high places and altars, if not by guilty participation, the rites practised by his strange wives to their strange gods. To what cause can we attribute this reticence? May we infer therefrom that, when Ecclesiastes was written, these idolatries were confined to the court of Solomon, had not vitiated the people of Israel, and had not estranged them from the worship of Jehovah? May not this reticence have been an especial designed adaptation of this book to the infirmities and ignorance and blindness of the neighbouring nations, to secure its wider circulation and more ready reception, and to win them gradually, as they were able to bear and receive the truth, to the sole worship of the one living and true God? The non-condemnation of idolatry in this didactic poem seems to merit further investigation than it has yet received.

It is also remarkable, though Solomon in his old age went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites, and built an high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Moloch the abomination of the children of Ammon, and for the false gods of all his strange wives, who burnt incense and sacrificed with their gods, that there is no record of any temple or altar having been erected to any Egyptian deity, or of the

introduction of any Egyptian idolatry into Judea, though his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter was one of the first acts of his reign. Indeed Solomon is recorded, after his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, to have 'loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father' (1 Kings iii. 3). May we not infer therefrom, that this daughter of Pharaoh was a convert to Judaism, and that she, like the eunuch of Queen Candace, joined in the worship of the God of Israel? It is a singular fact, that none of the hieroglyphics yet deciphered refer to the Pharaoh whose daughter Solomon married. They throw no light on the lineage of this Pharaoh, nor on the place he holds in the history of Egypt.

I. This Book of Ecclesiastes, by inculcating a plurality of persons in the Godhead, condemns all denial of the Divinity of the Son and of the Personality of the Holy Ghost, all rejection of the triune Jehovah, the omnipotent CREATORS, Preservers, Administrators of the universe, in and through whom all live, and move, and have their being.

II. This book, by affirming that all Scripture is the voice of the good Shepherd to His Church, and that it is the ingatherer of souls unto Him, condemns all denial of plenary inspiration, whereby men of old wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

III. This book, by commending matrimony and social enjoyment, condemns enforced celibacy, monastic institutions, and monastic austerities.

IV. This book, by teaching that the departed have no cognizance of mundane affairs, and that they return no more to this vale of sin and misery, condemns the awful profanity of table-turning, and all operations of spiritualism to effect intercommunications between the dead and the living,—Satan's revival in the present day of the witchcraft of Endor, and of necromantic divination. To seek responses from the dead is to be guilty of the self-same criminality, wherewith Saul filled up the measure of his iniquities, and sealed his doom.

## THE DICTION OF ECCLESIASTES.

One peculiarity especially characterizes this book, the entire absence therefrom of the word *JEHOVAH*, the incommunicable name of the self-existent, eternal, and only true God. The cause of the reticence of this Name in this Book is veiled in deep mystery. We must not only *SEARCH* the Scriptures, but receive them with childlike docility, as God has seen fit to reveal them.

It has ever been a controverted question, whether this book should be rendered as verse or as prose, or as written partly in verse and partly in prose. I have no doubt that it is a didactic poem from the beginning to the end. It is more easily divisible into hemistichs than many portions of Isaiah and other prophets, and is equally, if not more poetical. The transitions from one subject to another are not more abrupt than those which constantly occur in Hosea, the alphabetical Psalms, and other poetical portions of the Old Testament. The author of *Khohelath* remarks, that ‘*Ecclesiastes*, besides the figurative and proverbial expressions to be found in no other part of Scripture, is undoubtedly metrical, and consequently the grammatication, in many places, not a little perplexed, from the frequent ellipses, abbreviations, transposition of words, and other poetic licenses allowed in all languages.’ The subject-matter of the poem will account for its sombre cast.

*Ecclesiastes* is not once *DIRECTLY* quoted or referred to in the New Testament. Neither are *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Esther*, the *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, *Obadiah*, or *Zephaniah*. Yet all these books, as well as *Ecclesiastes*, were received by the Jewish Church as canonical Scriptures, and have the sanction of Christ and His apostles.

The received Hebrew text of *Ecclesiastes* is perhaps more perfect, and has suffered less by transcription and transmission, than the text of any other book of the Old Testament. Of the various readings compiled by Kennicott and De Rossi from 569 Hebrew manuscripts and 165 printed editions of this book, which have been collated, few affect the sense, and those only very slightly. What a contrast between the

almost perfect received text of Ecclesiastes, and the erroneous and defective texts of the alphabetical psalms, and the transpositions in the Lamentations of Jeremiah !

Two causes may be assigned for the Aramaic diction and foreign idioms of this book :—1. Solomon's continuous intercourse with the daughter of Pharaoh, and with his other wives taken from the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites. 2. The importation of foreign words, customs, and idioms by his mercantile marine from Ophir, Arabia, Egypt, the coasts of the Mediterranean, and Tarshish. As grace does not obliterate, but sanctifies the natural character, so inspiration does not eradicate, nor of necessity transmute, but dedicates the intellectual faculties to God's service and glory. It would seem that the dialect of this didactic poem was the language commonly spoken in Judea in the latter days of the reign of King Solomon by the great mass of the Jewish people.

The Aramaic cast of this didactic poem would render it both more intelligible and more acceptable to the neighbouring nations. As the prophecies of Balaam were communicated to Moab and Midian before they were made known by inspiration to Israel, so is it not possible, yea, is it not probable, that the book called Ecclesiastes, simultaneously with its communication to Israel, may have been widely circulated among the peoples and nations in treaty-alliance with Solomon, and among those who were swayed by his regal influence, or were admirers of his pre-eminent wisdom ? May we not conclude that this didactic poem was read by many at Sheba, at Ophir, at Tarshish, and in Egypt, and that many in those regions, as well as in Judea, savingly profited thereby ?

#### PLAN OF THE WORK.

The division of the Bible into chapters and verses is the fallible work of fallible man, and is no part of inspiration. In the most ancient manuscripts of the Bible, both Hebrew and Greek, even the letters are generally not divided into words. The division of the Old Testament into chapters was begun by Cardinal Hugo about the middle of the thirteenth century, was improved by Rabbi Nathan in 1438, and was



completed by the enumeration of verses in the edition of the Hebrew Bible edited by Athias, 1661. The division of the New Testament into verses was accomplished by Robert Stephens during a journey on horseback from Paris to Lyons, and first appeared in his edition of the Greek Testament, 1551. Defective as this work of Robert Stephens may be, few perhaps of the present day would have made a better or more accurate division, in such haste, and amidst such singular obstructions and impediments. Moreover, this division into chapters and verses was designed rather to facilitate the composition and use of Concordances than to elucidate the sense of the original. The didactic poem of Ecclesiastes in this volume is separated into twenty-one parts or sections, according to the sense, as a substitution for its division into twelve chapters by Cardinal Hugo and Rabbi Nathan.

Each part or section is prefaced with an introductory analysis. The translation is made from the received text of Vander Hooght, 1705, except where otherwise expressed in the Critical Appendix. This new translation is not designed to supersede the authorized version, or to be a substitute for it, but to express in unambiguous English idiom what the author believes to be the genuine sense and Divine teaching of the inspired original. The notes which follow are simply explanatory and illustrative, designed to elucidate the obscurities of this ancient didactic poem, and to render both its diction and allusions clear, perspicuous, and intelligible to the English reader. Ecclesiastes, in the author's judgment, is sufficiently experimental and practical to render all further comment superfluous and unnecessary. When its obscurities are elucidated, and its Orientalisms are explained, this poem is its own best commentary.

The map of Africa is designed to exhibit to the reader a bird's-eye view of the relative lengths of the two voyages from Ezion-geber to Tarshish—the one by the circumnavigation of Africa, the other by the transit of the ancient canal of Sesostris, *alias* Rameses II.

The sketch-map of the ancient canal, from the Nile to Suez, exhibits the vestiges thereof yet remaining, traced in a double red line, and its supposititious continuation, where the vestiges are doubt-

ful or no longer visible, in a single red line. The line of the French canal, from the Mediterranean Sea to the south of Lake Ballah, is copied from *Annales du Genie Civil*; Paris, Sept. 1866.

Of the four coins of Carteia<sup>1</sup> subjoined, the first three are in the author's cabinet. He also possesses another coin of Carteia, having the obverse of No. I., and the inscription of the reverse of No. III., but with a figure somewhat different. These Roman colonial coins are all brass, and are all anterior to the Christian era. No gold or silver coins of Carteia are known, nor any with inscriptions in Phœnician characters. The coins of Carteia are numerous, and exhibit at least thirty types, differing more or less in obverse or reverse from the four here engraved. The plates of these coins are here given for three reasons :—1. Because Carteia was an ancient Phœnician colony before



FIG. 1.



FIG. 2.



FIG. 3.



FIG. 4.

it was subjugated by Rome, as is evident from the identity of the effigy on the obverse of these coins of Carteia with the most ancient coins of Tyre and Sidon. Compare the obverse of these coins with

<sup>1</sup> These coins of Carteia SEEM to attest the fact, that the pendent or hinged rudder was known to the Phœnicians centuries before it was used by other nations. Eckhel and Mionnet describe the reverses of types 2, 3, and 4 to be rudders. That these rudders do not represent the long paddle-oars, but a short hinged *gubernaculum navis*, SEEMS to me evident. These coins must have been struck in the lifetime of Drusus and Germanicus, before the Christian era; whereas James Smith, Esq. of Jordanhill, refers the adoption in Europe of the hinged rudder to 'about the end of the thirteenth, or early in the fourteenth century.' The ship in which St. Paul was wrecked, having a crew of 276, was steered by two paddles or large oars. *Sub judice lis est*. On this controverted subject let the reader judge for himself.

the coins of Tyre and Sidon in the thirty-fourth table of Gesenius' *Phœnician Remains*, Leipsic, 1837. II. Because Carteia, situated in a commodious bay immediately contiguous to the promontory of Gibraltar, must have been a convenient harbour of refuge, wherein the Phœnician<sup>1</sup> vessels could safely shelter themselves and await fair wind and weather, previous to the navigation of the Straits of Gibraltar, and the prosecution of their voyage for tin to Britannia (daughter of tin), the Cassiterides of antiquity, the Ultima Thule of Tyrian commerce. III. Because of the supposition entertained by some, that Carteia was the Tarshish of Scripture, from the similarity of the names tARTessus cARTEia. The identity of Carteia<sup>2</sup> and Tarshish, asserted by Pliny, if it could be established, would explain why the British Isles are designated in prophecy 'the ships of Tarshish,' because England's possession of Gibraltar gives her the command both of the Straits and of the adjacent bay.

The sea-port in Spain, to which the fleet of Solomon triennially resorted for silver, iron, tin, lead, etc. (Ezekiel xxvii. 12), was doubtless called TARSHISH, after the name of the grandson of Japhet, whose descendants originally colonized it. The meaning of the word TARSHISH,

<sup>1</sup> The extraordinary extent of Phœnician colonization, and the consequent expansion of Phœnician commerce, have been greatly under-estimated. Phœnician inscriptions have been found in Cyprus, Carthage, Tugga, Numidia, Tripoli, Malta, and the island of Gerbe. Coins with inscriptions in the Phœnician language exist of the twenty-five following places, namely, of Tarsus in Cilicia; of Aere, Aradus, Beyroot, Carne, Laodicea, Marathus, Sidon, and Tyre, in Phœnicia; of Heraclea, Motya, Panormus, and Syracuse, in Sicily; of Cossura now Pantalaria, and Gaulos now Gozo, in the Mediterranean; of Achulla, Oœa, sea-port of Tripoli, Sabratha now Tripoli, Siga, and Vacea in Africa; of Abdera now Adra, Belo now Bolonia, Cadiz, Malaga, and Sextus in Spain;—stretching from Marathus on the shore of Palestine to Cadiz in Spain. To these twenty-five must be added Carteia, originally colonized by the Phœnicians, though no coins of Carteia with Phœnician legends are now known. The multitude of some of those coins, and the variety of their types, attest the wealth and large population of the colonies where these coins were struck. The following brass coin of Oœa is most rare, and was unknown to Gesenius. The letters are Phœnician, and signify Oœa. The head of Tiberius is most exquisite.



<sup>2</sup> May not Carteia (קרת־יא) have been so designated, because built on a peninsula or promontory. to distinguish it from other seaports? (א. INSULA, ISLAND, ISLE.—*Jeremiah* xlvii. 4.)

as the proper name of the great-grandson of Noah, is unknown. But in later Hebrew its signification is patent. The first syllable in the Chaldee of Daniel signifies A ROCK. This same word, signifying HEIGHT, HILL, ROCK, etc., occurs in Saxon, Irish, and Welsh, and in many English names of HIGH PLACES, for instance in Glastonbury Tor. Tyre itself derives its name from the fact that insular Tyre was built on a rocky island. The second syllable signifies WHITE MARBLE, ALABASTER (1 Chronicles xxix. 2, Esther i. 6, Canticles v. 15). The word TARSHISH, significant of THE WHITE CLIFFS OF ALBION, is the prophetic designation of the British Isles.

But whatever may have been the cause why inspiration attributes to Great Britain the prophetic designation of TARSHISH, that designation evidences the predestined glorious destiny of our country, as God's commissioned messenger-people, to restore expatriated Israel by sea to the shores of Palestine, when Jerusalem shall no longer be trodden down of the Gentiles, and the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled.

David predicts—

‘The kings of TARSHISH and of the isles shall bring presents,  
The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.’—(Psalm lxxii. 10.)

Zephaniah predicts—

‘My suppliants FROM BEYOND THE STREAMS OF CUSH,  
Shall bring the daughter of my dispersion an offering to me.’—  
(iii. 10.)

Isaiah predicts—

‘And he shall set up an ensign for the nations,  
And shall assemble the outcasts (lost ones, *Coptic*) of Israel,  
And gather together the dispersed of Judah  
From the four corners of the earth.  
The envy also of Ephraim shall depart,  
And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off,  
Ephraim shall not envy Judah,  
And Judah shall not vex Ephraim.  
And they shall fly upon the shoulders (in the ships, *LXX.*, *Coptic*,  
*Arabic*) of THE WESTWARD PHILISTINES.’—(xi. 12, 13.)



‘Surely the isles shall wait for Me,  
And the ships of TARSHISH first,  
To bring thy sons from far,  
Their silver and their gold with them,  
Unto the name of Jehovah thy God,  
Even to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified  
thee.’—(lx. 9.)

- 1 ‘Oh, land of the perpetual shadow of sails,  
Which art BEYOND THE STREAMS OF CUSH,
- 2 Accustomed to send ambassadors (missionaries) by sea,  
Even with fabrics of papyrus<sup>1</sup> (Bibles, ἐπιστολὰς βιβλίας, LXX.) upon  
the waters,  
Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled,  
To a people wonderful from their beginning and onward,  
A nation expecting, expecting, and trodden under foot,  
Whose land the streams have devastated.
- 3 All ye inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth,  
When He lifteth up an ensign on the mountains, see ye,  
And when He bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.
- 4 For thus hath Jehovah said unto me,  
“I will sit still (but I will keep My eye upon My prepared habi-  
tation),  
As the parching heat just before lightning,  
As the dewy cloud in the heat of harvest.”
- 5 For afore the harvest, when the bud is coming to perfection,  
And the blossom is becoming a juicy berry,  
He will cut off the useless shoots with pruning-hooks,  
And the luxuriant branches He will take away, He will cut down.
- 6 They shall be left together to the ravenous bird of the mountains,  
And to the wild beasts of the earth ;  
And upon it shall the ravenous bird summer,  
And all the beasts of the earth upon it shall winter.
- 7 At that time a present shall be brought unto Jehovah of hosts,

<sup>1</sup> The word כִּלְיָ occurs 309 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, and never signifies a sailing vessel, ship, or boat.

Of a people scattered and peeled,  
 Even of a people wonderful from their beginning and onward,  
 A nation expecting, expecting, and trodden under foot,  
 Whose land the streams have devastated,  
 Unto the place of the name of Jehovah of hosts, Mount Zion.'—(xviii.)

Isaiah, in chapter xviii., defines the LOCALITY of England, beyond and remote from the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean, the three ocean-streams which encircle Arabian Cush on the east, the west, and the south. Isaiah defines the CHARACTERISTICS of England as a pre-eminently naval state, whose ships navigate every sea, and trade with every people ; as a missionary kingdom, sending forth heralds of mercy to Jews, Mohammedans, and Pagans, and Bibles in every tongue and to every land ; as the predestined MESSENGER-PEOPLE, divinely commissioned to restore expatriated Israel to Palestine. And Isaiah predicts the present and future COLONIAL AND NAVAL SUPERIORITY of England, to enable her to fulfil this glorious commission amidst the impending crash of nations, and God's final judgments on an apostate world.

The implacable hostility so generally manifested to Christology, more especially to the Christology of the Psalms, prognosticates the rejection of the Messianic interpretations of chapters vii., viii., and ix. proposed in this volume. To see Christ prefigured in the Old Testament, where writers in general have not discerned Him ; to represent the man Christ Jesus 'ONE ABOVE A THOUSAND,' where others have only seen the 700 wives and the 300 concubines of Solomon ; to substitute submission to the sceptre of Messiah in place of subjection to the powers that be, is a high crime and unpardonable misdemeanour in these last days of Laodicean lukewarmness. Morbid feelings cause many to rest self-satisfied with anti-Messianic renderings and interpretations, however obscure or unintelligible they may be. Unlike Augustine and the Augustinian Fathers, they have no wish to discern Christ in the Bible where some may not have discerned Him. They see no beauty in these Messianic manifestations, that they should desire them. If however, these proscribed Messianic prefigurations remove any obscurities in this confessedly obscure book, ought not the reader to pause before

he reject them, until he can adduce some other interpretation which shall render equally intelligible that which is now obscure? Well does the author recollect the joyful ecstacy of his most highly esteemed and venerable friend, the Rev. T. T. Biddulph, of Bristol, when Bishop Horsley's work on the Psalms was first published. Rarely did that man of God appear on any platform without quoting or referring to this work, so grateful to his soul. But Augustine the renowned Bishop of Hippo, Kennicott and Horsley, Biddulph and Julius Bate, Jones of Nayland and Parkhurst, and Fry rector of Desford, etc. etc., have entered into their rest. Their mantle, it is feared, has fallen on few. By the many their Messianic renderings are unheeded or rejected. Another generation have arisen, who behold with complacency the Davidical application of Psalm xxii., and the ascription to the royal Psalmist, AS GOD'S JUST RECOMPENSE TO DAVID, 'the Lord hath recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight' (Psalm xviii. 24), a perfection solely fulfilled and manifested by Immanuel, Jehovah our righteousness, and certainly not pertaining to one who had been guilty of adultery and murder.

Bad books poison the soul, as bad food poisons the body. Novels, designated in modern nomenclature tales of fiction (SOME EXPRESSLY DESIGNED, PRINTED, AND PUBLISHED FOR SABBATH READING), sensational volumes, tomes antagonistic to truth both Divine and human, the characteristic, the bane, the curse of the present age, poison the intellect, debase the soul, alienate from God, and cause multitudes to see no beauty in Christ that they should desire Him. Yet Christ is 'the true bread, the life-giving bread, the bread of God, the bread of life, the bread which cometh down from heaven, that all may eat thereof, and not die. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.' As food is the nutriment of the body, so is Christ the nutriment of the soul. Christ is the sum and substance and acme of Divine revelation, which from Genesis to Revelation testifies of Him, 'la Via, la Verita, e la Vita,'—'the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' Hence to search the Scriptures intellectually, prayerfully, experimentally, with an earnest desire to discern Christ wherever Christ is therein revealed, is the paramount duty and requirement of the present day.

The Divine mandate is not merely to READ, but to SEARCH, the Scriptures. As miners find few nuggets of gold on the surface, but excavate immense treasures from the bowels of the earth, so Divine truth is sufficiently patent in the Scriptures, that the wayfaring man shall not err therein, whilst the Bible contains a recondite and inner sense, heavenly treasures, Messianic manifestations, and unfathomable depths, even ‘the unsearchable riches of Christ, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein,’ into which God’s children are privileged to delve in humility, faith, and prayer, that they may extract therefrom the mind of the Spirit in the volume of revelation.

If this volume shall elucidate any difficulties or reconcile any apparent discrepancies in Ecclesiastes, the most obscure and enigmatical of all the books of the Old Testament—if it shall shed any light on the reign, the commerce, the character, or the writings of the wisest of men—if it shall render more clear and conspicuous than heretofore Solomon’s contrition, repentance, and salvation, to God be all the glory. As a labourer in God’s vineyard I have, however unworthily, sown the seed. May the Lord of the harvest vouchsafe His blessing, and grant an abundant increase! and may the study of the Book of Ecclesiastes be as abundantly sanctified to the reader as through grace it has been sanctified to the author! As far as this volume is accordant with the Divine will, may the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him the God and Father of His people, crown it with His blessing, to the edification of His Church, the elucidation of His word, the manifestation of His truth, and the repression of error! Whatever therein may be defective or erroneous, may the covenant God of all grace pardon the writer and obliterate from the mind of the reader! And may the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls prepare both writer and reader for whatever events may be coming on the earth, arm them with the whole armour of God, cause them to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory in anticipation of the speedy advent of Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords, and enable each of them to realize the gracious promise, ‘Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life!’



# ECCELESIASTES.

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## I.

### CHAPTER I.—VERSES 1-11.

THE vanity, instability, fluctuations, and unsatisfactoriness of all earthly pursuits and labours. Nothing secular can satisfy the immortal soul. Nothing sublunary can constitute the chief good of man.

- 1 THE words of Khoheleth, son of David, reigning in Jerusalem.
- 2 Vanity of vanities, saith Khoheleth,  
Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.
- 3 What profit is there to man  
From all his labour wherein he laboureth under the sun?
- 4 One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh,  
But the earth abideth for ever.
- 5 The sun also riseth, and the sun setteth,  
And hasteth to its place from whence it riseth.
- 6 The wind bloweth toward the south, and veereth about toward the  
north,  
It veereth round and round continually,  
And ever revolveth on its circuits.
- 7 All water-currents flow into the ocean,  
Yet the ocean does not overflow.  
Unto the place from whence the water-currents flow,  
Thither do they again return.
- 8 All words fail, man has not the power of utterance,  
The eye cannot be satisfied with seeing,  
Nor can the ear be satiated with hearing.
- 9 That which hath been is that which shall be,  
And that which hath been done is that which shall be done :  
And there is nothing new under the sun.

- 10 Does anything exist of which it is said, See, this is new ?  
 It hath already been in the ages which were before us.
- 11 There is no remembrance of those who have lived aforetime,  
 Neither shall there be any remembrance of those who shall live  
 henceforth,  
 With those who will exist thereafter.

#### VERSES 1 AND 2.

The Hebrew word *KHOHELETH*, the distinctive appellation which Solomon appropriates to himself throughout this Book, signifies in the Arabic, a sister dialect of the Hebrew language, 'THE REPENTANT INVALID,'—a signification most suitable to his penitential sorrow of soul and premature bodily decay, causing his decease at the age of fifty-eight, possibly somewhat earlier. This word would be understood to signify THE REPENTANT INVALID in the kingdom of Sheba, at Ophir, and throughout all the peninsula of Arabia, annually coasted for commercial intercourse and traffic, by the merchant ships of Solomon. Solomon is not recorded to have preached, on any one occasion, or to have convened any assembly, except the one preparatory to the dedication of the Temple. See Preface, and Critical Appendix at the end of the volume.

#### VERSE 1.

Solomon was the son of David by Bathsheba: 'David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias' (*Matthew* i. 6).

Solomon wrote this Book by Divine inspiration. Ecclesiastes is an integral part of the Old Testament, which, as well as the New Testament, 'is given by inspiration of God' (2 *Timothy* iii. 16). Solomon and all the other writers of Scripture spake and wrote 'as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 *Peter* i. 21).

#### VERSES 2 AND 3.

Man, by the fall, hath subjected himself and all things under the sun to vanity ; so that vanity is stamped on all things pertaining to humanity. The words UNDER THE SUN restrict this vanity and unsatisfactoriness to secular works, springing from secular motives, and done for secular ends.

#### VERSE 4.

'The generations of men upon the earth resemble leaves upon an evergreen tree. The earth bears the human race, as the tree bears its many leaves, and is full of men, some dying, and others by birth succeeding to their places. The tree is always evergreen, and replenished with leaves. But look beneath the crust of the earth. Consider over how many dead leaves you constantly walk.'—*Augustine*.

David asserts the sempiternity of the earth in Psalm civ. 5 :—

'Who laid the foundations of the earth,  
 That it should not be removed FOR EVER.'

And again in Psalm cxix. 90 :—

'Thou hast established the earth, and IT ABIDETH.'

In Psalm xxxvii. this covenant-promise, the only verse of the Bible quoted by Mahomet in his Koran, is given and repeated five times :—

‘The righteous shall inherit the earth,  
And shall dwell thereon FOR EVER.’

In Revelation v. 10 is recorded the song of the Church triumphant :—‘Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign ON THE EARTH.’ This earth was once deluged with water to punish the sins of the antediluvians. It will undergo a deluge of fire to renovate, and purify, and prepare it for the habitation of the glorified. The Noachian deluge did not destroy this globe, neither will the universal conflagration, yet to be, annihilate it. God created this earth for His glory. From the Fall until now the earth hath not subserved the glory of God, and from the present time until the second Advent will not subserve His glory, Satan being the god of this world, and ruling in the children of disobedience. But the deposition of Satan from his usurpation will usher in the universal reign of Immanuel, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Then the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters now cover the sea. Then Jehovah shall be glorified throughout all creation. Then, at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess, yea, the tongues of devils and damned spirits, that He is Jehovah, to the glory of God the Father. For the elect, its destined lords, this earth was created. For the elect this earth is divinely administered, that all things may work together for good to those who love God, and are the called according to His purpose. Of the glorification and reign of the saints, this earth will be the theatre at the restitution of all things. ‘Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not, that we shall judge angels?’—(1 *Corinthians* vi. 2, 3.)

#### VERSE 5.

The Bible is the poor man’s book, and its language is for the most part addressed to every capacity. The object of the Bible is not to teach science, but to make wise unto salvation by the manifestation of Christ to the soul through the illumination of the Spirit. Solomon writes of the sun, according to its appearance in the heavens, in the popular language of daily life; not in the technical terms of astronomical science. Solomon writes, and modern astronomers speak, of the ‘RISING’ and ‘SETTING’ of the sun, just as the unscientific and vulgar do. Astronomical accuracy would have been unintelligible to the poor, to whom the gospel must be preached both orally and by the circulation of Scripture. Yet the Bible, rightly interpreted, never contradicts scientific truth. There is far more of science in the Bible than philosophers have ever dreamt of. The Hebrew word employed by Solomon, rendered ‘SUN,’ in many passages, if not always, signifies the SOLAR LIGHT, in contradistinction to the SOLAR ORB. In 1 Samuel xi. 9, we read: ‘To-morrow by that time the SUN BE HOT, ye shall have help.’ It is self-evident that, in this passage, the HEAT OF THE SUN must signify the heat of the SOLAR RADIATION; not the heat of the SOLAR ORB. And thus Joshua x. 12, 13 ought to be understood: ‘SOLAR LIGHT, stand thou still’ (be thou stationary) ‘upon Gibeon; and thou, LUNAR LIGHT, in the valley of Ajalon. And the SOLAR LIGHT stood still’ (was stationary), ‘and the LUNAR LIGHT stayed’ (was stationary), ‘until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.’ To the Hebrew-speaking Israelites this teaching of Solomon would imply, that the solar light riseth in the east and setteth in the west, and daily reappeareth in the east by continuous revolution.

‘Th’ unwearied sun, from day to day,  
 Does his Creator’s power display,  
 And publishes to every land  
 The work of an Almighty hand !’

VERSE 6.

In this verse Solomon affirms the rotation of the winds. This rotatory motion of aerial currents results from the revolution of the earth on its axis, and from its periodical circuit round the sun, both affecting the diffusion of the solar heat and the temperature of the crust of the earth. Hence arise ocean-currents, trade-winds, monsoons, tornados, cyclones, and rotatory gales. A comparison of the inspired language of Solomon with that of Theophrastus, Pliny, and Aristotle on the winds, will demonstrate the superior scientific accuracy of Scripture to the scientific researches of Greece and Rome. But nothing warrants the belief that Solomon, pre-eminent as he was in political wisdom and architectural skill, understood the planetary system, the motions of the heavenly bodies, the rotation of the earth on its axis, or the innumerable discoveries which modern optical instruments and astronomical science have brought to light. To what cause, then, must we refer Solomon’s correct scientific phraseology? To that supernatural wisdom, whereby he was inspired to write this book for the edification of the Church in every age and every clime, and to employ language the full force of which was neither understood nor appreciated either by himself or by his contemporaries. To this verse our Lord seems to have had some allusion (however distant), when he said to Nicodemus, ‘The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one born of the Spirit.’ This allusion will appear more striking, when we bear in mind that in the Aramaic tongue, as well as in Greek, the same word signifies both WIND and SPIRIT, the meaning being determined solely by the context. (See the Peshito-Syriac version of John iii. 8.)

VERSE 7.

The Hebrew word rendered WATER-CURRENTS is a generic term comprehending both rivers and minor streams of water, including wadys or winter-torrents of the East. In the index to Tristram’s *Land of Israel*, forty-two wadys are enumerated; in the index to Stanley’s *Sinai and Palestine*, forty-eight; and in the index to Wilson’s *Lands of the Bible*, not less than eighty-five. In the three elaborate volumes of Robinson’s *Researches in Palestine*, the word *wady* is of constant occurrence. This Hebrew word rendered WATER-CURRENTS is translated in the Septuagint, and in our authorized version, in both acceptations, as significant both of rivers and minor streams of water.

There is no word in the Hebrew language answering to our generic term OCEAN, comprehending the waters of the Indian, Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic and Antarctic oceans, of which OCEAN the Mediterranean and Red Seas are only oceanic branches. The statement of Solomon implies the OCEAN, though in Hebrew he could not express the precise term, and the Chaldee Targum renders it: ‘THE OCEAN WHICH ENCIRCLES THE WORLD.’ The proposition of Solomon is universal, affirming that the mighty ocean is the grand receptacle of all the rivers and minor streams and wadys of this terrestrial globe. The water-currents return again, ascending by evaporation, and redescending in rain. ‘THE ABYSS and THE SEA are synonymous terms, by which the great assemblage of oceanic waters is alike designated.’—*Faber*.



## VERSE 8.

‘Al thinges are so hard to be knowen that no man can expresse them.’—*Cranmer's Bible*, 1549; and *The Bishops' Bible*, 1595.

Man is never satiated with the things of time and sense, although utterly unable fully to comprehend, explain, and appreciate them.

## VERSE 9.

Solomon does not affirm that there SHALL BE nothing new under the sun, but that there IS nothing new.

‘Does anything exist of which it is said, See, this is new?

It hath already been in the ages which were before us.’

The phenomena of nature were in Solomon's time what they had heretofore been. Nor have we reason to suppose that there were any important discoveries in art and science made by Solomon, which had not heretofore been known. Solomon does not deny that such discoveries should be made in subsequent ages. The invention of gunpowder, the art of printing, the mariners' compass, magnetism, electro-magnetism, and electro-telegraphy, steam-navigation, railroad-travelling, photography, ironclads, submarine electric wires, gun-cotton, rifled cannon, breech-loading muskets, tubular and other iron bridges, the pendulum, the telescope, astronomical, geological, and innumerable other scientific discoveries, are all posterior in time to the declaration of Solomon that there IS nothing new under the sun, and are the fulfilment of the prophecy of Daniel, that ‘AT THE TIME OF THE END many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased’ (*Daniel* xii. 4).

Augustine remarks, that Solomon teaches in this verse, ‘that all things have been already accomplished in the predestination of God, and that therefore there is nothing new under the sun.’ And Jerome says, ‘All things which shall be have been ordained by the prescience and predestination of God. Even they who were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, as to election have had a previous existence.’ On this verse Maimonides comments: ‘Our wise men affirm of all miraculous deviations from the ordinary course of nature, which have occurred, or which are predicted to occur hereafter, that they have originated from the Divine will which ordained them on the six days of creation, and that when they do occur they are not really NEW, but have been pre-ordained. There is nothing new under the sun.’

The heresies which now assail and infect the Church are but reiterations and reappearances of ancient apostasies. The sin of the apostate apostle was identical with that of the apostate prophet. Both lusted after the wages of iniquity; both loved gold more than God; both had a presentiment of eternal misery; both went to the same place, the place of perdition. Modern spiritualism is Satan's revival of the fictitious miracles of Jannes and Jambres, and of the witchcraft of the cave of Endor. Modern ritualism is Satan's revival of the abominations of the Chaldeans portrayed in vermilion, detailed and condemned in the eighth chapter of Ezekiel. Papal Rome, in the symbolic imagery of the Apocalypse, is the resurrection and personification of Pagan Babylon. Voltaire, Rousseau, Paine, Strauss, Renan, the fallen star of Africa, and the many sceptics and semi-sceptics of the present day, are mere resuscitations and adaptations to the nineteenth century of Simon Magus, Cerinthus, Celsus, Porphyry, Julian the Apostate, etc., and of them that held the doctrine of Balaam, the Nicolaitans, the Gnostics, the Manichæans, etc., Satan's ancient emissaries to oppose the gospel and to plunge men into endless perdition. There is no NEW heresy under the sun. The prophet Jeremiah thus graphically depicts these heretics:—

‘They are all of them the dross of revolvers,  
 Passing with a fraudulent currency ;  
 Brass and iron all of them,  
 Instruments of adulteration are they.  
 The bellows are burned by the fire,  
 The lead is entirely spent ;  
 The refiner hath melted in vain,  
 For the bad are not separated.  
 Reprobated silver call ye them,  
 For Jehovah hath reprobated them.’

Chap. vi. 28-30.—*Blayney's translation.*

## II.

### CHAPTER I.--VERSES 12-18.

THE past experience of Solomon. Solomon, the wisest of men, sought felicity of soul and stability of peace in wisdom, philosophy, and the scientific investigation of the ways and works of man, of all things done under the sun. Personal experience painfully taught him, that secular wisdom and human knowledge, however excellent in themselves, without Divine illumination from the Holy Ghost, can only result in vanity and vexation of spirit.

- 12 I am Khoheleth, reigning over Israel in Jerusalem.  
 13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom  
 All things which have been done under the sun ;  
 This grief-ful toil hath God assigned to the children of Adam to  
 toil therein.  
 14 I have considered all the works which have been done under  
 the sun ;  
 And, behold, all are vanity and vexation of spirit.  
 15 That which is crooked cannot be made straight ;  
 And that which is defective cannot be estimated.  
 16 I communed with my own heart, saying,  
 I, behold, I have increased and advanced wisdom  
 Beyond all who have been in Jerusalem before me ;  
 Yea, my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.  
 17 And I gave my heart to know wisdom,  
 And to know madness and folly :  
 I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

18 For in much wisdom is much solicitude ;  
And he who increaseth knowledge increaseth care.

## VERSE 12.

KHOHELETH, that is, the REPENTANT INVALID (see Note on i. 1, 2). The rendering I AM KHOHELETH, is fully warranted by the authority of our English version, wherein the Hebrew verb is so rendered in the present tense in five passages, and many others (see Critical Note in Appendix). The full meaning of the Hebrew is : I HAVE BEEN, AND NOW AM, KHOHELETH, THE REPENTANT INVALID.'

## VERSE 13.

God hath assigned to man this mental labour in mercy, to humble his soul in the dust, and to reveal to him his absolute need of Divine teaching. If man, by his own wisdom, cannot thoroughly comprehend secular truth, how much less can he understand spiritual truth, without the illumination of the Spirit of God ?

In this and eight other verses of Ecclesiastes (namely, ii. 3, 8 ; iii. 10, 18, 19 ; viii. 11 ; ix. 3, 12), Solomon, writing under Divine inspiration, affirms that mankind are THE CHILDREN OF ADAM, the one universal progenitor of the whole human race. Jerome asserts that, throughout the whole Book of Ecclesiastes, and throughout the Scriptures generally, men universally are designated in Hebrew, THE CHILDREN OF ADAM. No variety of colour, physiognomy, stature, external appearance, or language, can warrant the negation of this Divine truth, explicitly stated in these nine verses, and reiterated twelve times in other books of the Old Testament. In Psalm xxxiii. 13, 14, we read :

'Jehovah looketh from heaven ; He beholdeth ALL THE CHILDREN OF ADAM.

'From the place of His habitation He looketh upon ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH.'

The parallelism of the Hebrew establishes that ALL THE CHILDREN OF ADAM and ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE EARTH are identical expressions. TO THE CHILDREN OF ADAM exclusively Ecclesiastes is addressed. For their edification solely all Scripture is inspired. To them alone the Comforter is promised to regenerate, sanctify, and make meet for the inheritance incorruptible, that fadeth not away. And for THE CHILDREN OF ADAM, and for none else, Christ the second Adam lived, and died, and rose again, for their redemption, justification, present salvation, and everlasting glory. Even the sceptical writer of the *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* candidly admits, that 'the evidence which physiology and philology present seems to him decidedly favourable to the idea of one local origin.' 'All researches,' writes Professor Eadie in his *Biblical Cyclopædia*, 'in physiology, ethnography, and comparative philology, prove, more and more conclusively, that men have sprung from one pair. Varieties of form, colour, and language, are produced by numerous causes and circumstances. Man is but one species, essentially one, though externally modified.' An eminent scientific inquirer has stated his disbelief that the Negro and the Mongol have descended from Adam, because they differ from Caucasians in colour, physiognomy, contour, and language, and his belief of a pre-Adamite human race, who, armed with flint hatchets, 'CONTENDED FOR MANY GENERATIONS WITH THE MAMMOTH, THE WOOLLY RHINOCEROS, AND CAVE-BEAR.' What he disbelieves has Scripture warrant, being implied or asserted twenty-one times in the Old Testament. What he believes is so impracticable, that Omnipotence alone could effect it, and the declaration of Omniscience could alone justify its belief. Scepticism strains out the gnat, but willingly swallows the camel. Scepticism attributes the supernatural



to puny man, whose breath is in his nostrils, but denies the supernatural to the omnipotent, omniscient Creator, Preserver, and Administrator of the universe. Revelation only extends from the Adamic creation to the second Advent. Nothing is revealed anterior to this creation. Subsequent to the second Advent, we have only distant glimpses of Christ's glory, the glorification of the saints, and the restitution of all things. Whenever scientific facts do not concur with the apparent letter or spirit of Revelation, the discrepancy should be attributed to man's defect of knowledge and comprehension. Inferences from these facts in derogation of the plenary inspiration of Scripture are presumptuous acts of high treason against the Majesty of heaven. The volume of Revelation and the book of Nature emanate from the same Divine Author, and can never contradict each other.

#### VERSE 14.

All works which have been done under the sun have been perverted to secularize the human mind, and to divert it from the one thing needful, by the machination and temptations of him who is the god of this world, and ruleth in the children of disobedience. Thus, by Satan's instigation, temporal blessings, bestowed on the human race by a beneficent Creator to testify His love, and to sweeten man's pilgrim-state here below, become sources of evil, and sinners accumulate transgression.

#### VERSES 16 AND 17.

The Book of Ecclesiastes was composed by Solomon in his declining years, after he had been reclaimed from that apostasy into which he had unhappily lapsed. This Book is a record of his personal experience during that apostasy, of his vain pursuit of ideal wisdom and true happiness, of his accumulation of wives and concubines, horses and chariots, excessive wealth and architectural edifices, which he stigmatizes as vanity of vanities, and justly pronounces, that all is vanity. Solomon was guilty of the excessive multiplication of wives, of horses, and of silver and gold, contrary to the Mosaic prohibition in Deuteronomy xvii. 16, 17: 'The king shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.'

#### VERSE 18.

The wisdom and knowledge here mentioned are secular, pertaining to the things of time and sense,—not the hypostatic wisdom predicted in Proverbs, nor that wisdom from above, which maketh wise unto salvation through faith in Christ. Of this secular wisdom, Henry pithily remarks: 'Great scholars make themselves great mourners.'

The more intimate knowledge the child of God possesses of the world, of the things of the world, and of the men of the world, the more intensely will his soul be grieved by man's apostasy, and the dishonour done to God, and the stronger will be his heart's response to the language of Augustine: 'The more the love of God abounds within you, the more will you mourn over the sinner, not in anger, but in grief and lamentation for him.'

## III.

## CHAPTER II.—VERSES 1-11.

The past experience of Solomon. Solomon, having in vain sought for the supreme good in secular wisdom and knowledge, and a philosophic investigation of mundane concerns, again prosecutes the same inquiry, and seeks it in mirth and hilarity, in the acquisition of riches and architectural erections ; combining intellectual gratification with luxurious refinements. Painful experience again inculcated the same lesson, and practically taught Solomon, that vanity and vexation of spirit are inscribed on all things here below, and that nothing terrestrial can savingly benefit the soul.

- 1 I SAID in my mind,  
Come now, I will prove thee with mirth, and enjoy thou pleasure,  
And, lo, this also is vanity.
- 2 I said of laughter, What insanity !  
And of mirth, What does this avail ?
- 3 I revolved in my mind that I would cherish my body with wine,  
Yet training my mind in wisdom,  
And that I would comprehend folly, until I could discover  
What is best for the children of Adam which they should do under  
the sun  
During the term of the days of their life.
- 4 I erected works of magnificence, I built for myself houses,  
I planted for myself vineyards,
- 5 I made for myself gardens and parks,  
And I planted in them fruit trees of every kind.
- 6 I made for myself reservoirs of water,  
To water therewith the wood germinant of trees.
- 7 I procured men-servants and maid-servants,  
And had servants born in my house.  
I had also large herds of great and small cattle,  
Above all who have been in Jerusalem before me.
- 8 I also amassed to myself silver and gold,  
And treasures the most rare of kings and countries ;  
I procured for myself men-singers and women-singers,  
And the delight of the sons of Adam, a wife and wives.
- 9 More magnificent was I and more opulent

- Than all who had been in Jerusalem before me,  
 And my wisdom stood me in good stead.
- 10 Nothing also which my eyes desired withheld I from them,  
 From no gratification restrained I my heart,  
 For my heart was gratified with all my labour :  
 And this was my portion from all my labour.
- 11 Then I again reverted to all the works which my hands had wrought  
 And the labour which I had laboured to accomplish,  
 And, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit,  
 For nothing under the sun can profit.

## VERSES 1 AND 2.

‘ At length thou ’lt find  
 That all the mighty expectations raised  
 By Pleasure, sweet enchantress, with her train  
 Of Laughter, Jest, and Song, the sumptuous feast,  
 Full-flowing bowl, and midnight roar, will end  
 Like crackling thorns, beneath a caldron placed,  
 Which blaze awhile, but soon reduced to smoke.’—*K’hoheloth*.<sup>1</sup>

## VERSE 4.

Of all the magnificent erections of Solomon, the substructure of the present wall of the Haram, from north-east to south-east, facing the Mount of Olives, and overlooking the brook Kedron, is a remnant, being his masonry. Pierotti himself examined different portions of this substructure, and from his own observation has confirmed this interesting fact. See Pierotti’s *Jerusalem*, p. 66, and his Plate No. x., representing the different styles of masonry of Solomon, Nehemiah, Herod, the Romans, and the Saracens. Whether we call the Hebrew stone-dressing, BEVEL, RABBET, CHISEL-DRAFT, or L’APPAREIL, or whatever may be our opinion of the conclusiveness or inconclusiveness of Pierotti’s statement, the fact is indisputable, that Josephus attributes to Solomon the building of this substructure, of 400 cubits altitude ; and that history nowhere records the demolition of this substructure, either by convulsion of nature or by the hand of man. Such demolition must have destroyed the eastern fortifications of Jerusalem, if not part of the city itself. We therefore infer that the existing substructure is the masonry of Solomon, substantially now remaining as he built it. When our Lord foretold to His disciples, that one stone should not be left upon another, He spake of the parts of the Temple visible to the disciples from the Mount of Olives, not of its unseen foundations. Josephus thus describes the height of the substructure and of the superstructure of the cloister Solomon erected upon it : ‘ These cloisters belonged to the outer court, and

<sup>1</sup> The name of this talented translator of Ecclesiastes into blank verse has irrecoverably perished. He seems to have been known to Rev. John Wesley, who informs us in his *Journal* that he was a Turkey merchant, and that he was preserved in the dreadful earthquake at Lisbon by part of the house falling so as to block up the entrance, whereby he was shut in and his life was saved ; all who had run out of the house having been dashed to pieces by the falling edifices. His name has perished, but he has left ‘ *monumentum aere perennius*, ’ most highly extolled by Rev. John Wesley, Dr. Adam Clarke, and Dr. Lee, Regius Professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge. The first edition of this translation of Ecclesiastes into blank verse is in quarto, and bears date 1768. See Preface of Nathaniel Higgins to his edition, printed in 8vo at Whitchurch, Salop.

were situated in a deep valley, and had walls that reached 400 cubits. This cloister deserves to be mentioned better than any other under the sun. For while the valley was very deep, and its bottom could not be seen, if you looked from above into the depth, the immense additional elevation of the cloister stood upon that height, insomuch that if any one looked down from the top of the battlements, down both these altitudes, he would be giddy, while his sight could not reach to such an immense depth.' Besides the magnificent Temple, Solomon built--

1. His own house, the erection of which occupied thirteen years.
2. A house for Pharaoh's daughter.
3. Millo, and the fortifications of Jerusalem.
4. The house of the forest of Lebanon, and its splendid porch.
5. Tadmor in the wilderness, and store-cities at Hamath.
6. Gezer.
7. Bethhoron the Upper, } both fenced cities.
8. Bethhoron the Lower, }
9. Baalath, and store-cities adjacent thereto.
10. Hazor.
11. Megiddo.
12. Cities for chariots and horsemen.

At Tadmor, magnificent ruins are yet visible, but it is uncertain when or by whom they were erected. Of all Solomon's buildings not one certain undoubted vestige now remains, except the substructure already named, the reservoirs or pools of water at Urtas, and the recently discovered baths of marble adjacent thereto.

#### VERSE 6.

Solomon's three reservoirs or pools of water, and the aqueduct he constructed to convey water from them to Jerusalem, yet remain, though not in their pristine condition. The three pools are situated south-west of Bethlehem, and are distant from the Jaffa Gate six miles and five furlongs. Solomon's aqueduct passed through Bethlehem, and by a tortuous course of twelve miles and two furlongs conveyed water to an immense cistern beneath the Temple. These three huge reservoirs, which irrigated the gardens in the valley, and supplied Bethlehem and Jerusalem with water, are built of large square stones, well cemented, and measure as follow :—

1. Upper pool, length 380 feet.
  - „ „ breadth, east end, 236 feet.
  - „ „ „ west end, 229 feet.
  - „ „ depth at east end, 25 feet.
2. Middle pool, length 423 feet.
  - „ „ breadth, east end, 250 feet.
  - „ „ „ west end, 160 feet.
  - „ „ depth at east end, 39 feet.
3. Lower pool, length 582 feet.
  - „ „ breadth, east end, 207 feet.
  - „ „ „ west end, 148 feet.
  - „ „ depth at east end, 50 feet.

See Robinson's *Palestine*, vol. i. p. 474-6, Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 399, and the accurate delineation of these pools in Plate x. of Pierotti's *Jerusalem*. Since the above was written,



the Pasha of Jerusalem has increased the fall of water from Urtas, has converted the three pools or reservoirs into two, and has repaired the aqueduct, so that water again flows into Jerusalem from the pools of Solomon.

Josephus states that Solomon daily resorted to Etham, the ancient name of the village near to these reservoirs, now called Urtas: 'There was a certain place about fifty furlongs distant from Jerusalem, which is called Etham; very pleasant it is in fine gardens, and abounding in rivulets of water. Thither did Solomon use to go out in the morning, sitting on high in his chariot.'—*Antiquities*, viii. 7. 8.

A recent discovery has been made of a most magnificent reservoir, twenty yards square, and of a bath, both faced with marble slabs; also of a bath of intermediate size connected with the reservoir, and of shafts and richly carved capitals, all of pure white marble, in the eastern portion of the garden cultivated by Mr. Meshullam, near to these pools or reservoirs. Who but King Solomon could have erected these magnificent baths, and these magnificently sculptured pillars, resembling those in the substructure of the Temple? Can we doubt that Solomon erected them and used them?—See Tristram's *Land of Israel*, page 400.

THE WOOD GERMINANT OF TREES signifies nurseries of seedlings.

#### VERSE 8.

The greater part of the treasures of gold and silver amassed by Solomon was imported into Palestine by his two fleets. Solomon is not recorded to have built any ships except at Ezion-Geber. Some of these ships sailed to Tarshish. The only Tarshish of the Old Testament is a sea-port on the coast of Spain. Of Solomon's two fleets, one coasted the peninsula of Arabia, and imported the greater part of the gold, also almag trees, and spices. That this fleet traded as far as India, or that Solomon had any DIRECT intercourse with India, has never yet been PROVED. The other fleet of Solomon WENT TO TARSHISH (2 Chronicles ix. 21), and is therefore called the NAVY OF TARSHISH (1 Kings x. 22), and brought back triennially a freight of 'gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks;' or, as I prefer to render, 'GOLD, SILVER, ELEPHANTS' TEETH, TRUNKS OF TREES, AND MASTS FOR SHIPS.' Now, that the ancient merchant ships built by Solomon should have triennially circumnavigated the whole of Africa from the Red Sea to near the Straits of Gibraltar, rounding the Cape of Good Hope, seems an absolute impossibility. Hence we conclude that this merchant fleet passed through the canal of Sesostri or Rameses, descended the Nile, and coasted the Mediterranean Sea to Tarshish, a commercial emporium of the Phœnicians on the Atlantic coast of Spain, at the mouth of the Bœtis or Guadalquivir, not far from the ancient Gades, now Cadiz. See note postfixed to the Map of Africa, explanatory of this ancient canal, of its navigation by the Tarshish fleet of Solomon, and of the freight imported by that fleet.

A WIFE, his principal wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, King of Egypt.

WIVES, his seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines.

'What a lovely train  
Of blooming beauties, by connubial ties,  
Or gift of neighbouring kings, or spoils of war,  
Or made by purchase mine.'—*Khoheleth*.

The prominent distinction made by Solomon in this verse between the daughter of Pharaoh, his first wife, and his other seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, clearly manifests, that when he composed this didactic poem he had realized in his own heart, that the original institution of marriage was the marriage-union of one man and one



woman, and that polygamy and divorce were mysteriously conceded to the Jews on account of the hardness of their hearts. This prominent distinction seems also to imply his penitential lament for his idolatrous apostasy, resulting from these idolatrous intermarriages. Polygamy and divorce are condemned by Genesis ii. 24: 'They *TWAIN* shall be one flesh.' The word *TWAIN* is an integral portion of inspiration, being the reading of the Samaritan Pentateuch, of all the ancient versions, and of Matthew xix. 5, Mark x. 8, 1 Corinthians vi. 16, and Ephesians v. 31, and has the divine sanction of Christ Himself. The existence of polygamy in New Zealand, and in our other mission-fields, demonstrates the practical importance of the word *TWAIN* in Genesis ii. 24. The authority of Christ for the insertion of this word is paramount over its omission in every known Hebrew manuscript. The unwarrantable omission of this word *TWAIN*, whether intentional or unintentional, and the unwarrantable addition of 1 John v. 7 in the New Testament, by whomsoever introduced, besides other instances of addition and omission which might be adduced, prove the absolute necessity of some revision of the authorized English version, that obedience may be rendered to the Divine mandate: 'Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you' (*Deuteronomy* iv. 2). Super-excellent as the English authorized version is, its excellence must never be placed in competition with the integrity of God's Word as originally written, to which no man may add, and from which no man may subtract.

#### VERSE 10.

All the labour, erections, and accumulations of Solomon were merely things of time and sense, pertaining only to this life. They were his portion in time. They were his gratifications and the joy of his soul whilst he was in apostasy from God. The men of this world have their portion also in this life, and in this life only. May we, like the saints of old, have our affections elevated above the things of time and sense, and desire a heavenly country, 'that God may be called OUR God, because He hath prepared for us a city' (*Hebrews* xi. 16).

#### VERSE 11.

Nothing under the sun is a substantial good. Christ alone, realized by faith, can savingly benefit the soul, and impart abiding peace and permanent felicity.

### IV.

#### CHAPTER II.—VERSES 12-26.

THE past experience of Solomon. Solomon, having prosecuted a fruitless research after true and enduring happiness in secular wisdom and knowledge, in mirth and hilarity, in riches and architecture, in intellectual gratification and luxurious refinement, lays down the axiom, that the same destiny of death and oblivion awaits the wise man and the fool, and that he himself must leave his earthly possessions and scientific achievements to his successor, of whose wisdom he had no guarantee, of whose want of wisdom he had too clear a foresight. Solomon concludes his personal experience by the acknowledgment of God's sovereignty in the administration of human affairs. The recognition and realization

of God's sovereignty in grace and providence can alone impart joy and peace in believing. Apart from this sovereignty all under the sun is vanity and vexation of spirit.

12 MOREOVER, I again reverted to the contemplation of wisdom, and of madness and folly.

For what can any man effect who comes after the king ?

Even that which hath been already done.

13 Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly,

As much as light excelleth darkness.

14 The eyes of the wise man are in his head ;

But the fool walketh in darkness.

Yet I also perceived, that the same destiny awaiteth them both.

15 Then I said to myself,

As is the destiny of the fool, so the same destiny befalleth me ;

To what purpose then am I wiser than he ?

Therefore I said to myself, that this also is vanity.

16 For there will be no remembrance of the wise man more than of the fool for ever ;

In the length of days to come both will have been forgotten :

And how dieth the wise man ? even as the fool.

17 Therefore I hated life ;

Because grievous unto me was the work that had been done under the sun :

For all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

18 Yea, I hated all my labour wherein I had laboured under the sun ;

Because I must leave it to the man who shall be after me.

19 And who knoweth whether he will be a wise man or a fool ?

Yet shall he be lord over all my labour wherein I have laboured,

And wherein I have showed myself wise under the sun.

This also is vanity.

20 Yea, I again caused my heart to despair

Concerning all the labour wherein I had laboured under the sun.

21 Because there is a man whose labour is with wisdom, and knowledge, and dexterity ;

Yet to a man who hath not laboured therein he must leave it to be his portion.

This also is vanity and a great evil.

22 For what resulteth to man from all his labour and his disquietude of heart,

- Wherein he laboureth under the sun ?  
 23 Verily all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief ;  
 Yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night.  
 This also is vanity.  
 24 Man's happiness consisteth not in eating and drinking,  
 And in his soul experiencing delight in his labour.  
 Yet even this I perceived to be from the hand of God.  
 25 For without Him who can eat and who can enjoy pleasure ?  
 26 Verily He giveth to a man good in His sight wisdom, and know-  
 ledge, and joy :  
 But to the sinner He assigneth toil to amass and heap up,  
 That he may resign it to him who is good in the sight of God.  
 This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

## VERSES 12 AND 13.

This seems to be secular wisdom and skill which Solomon contrasted with folly, that from the comparison he might elicit where the *SUMMUM BONUM*, the sovereign good, could be found. He again prosecuted this investigation for his own satisfaction, and for the information of posterity, because none could expect to surpass the research of the wisest of men.

## VERSES 14, 15, AND 16.

The same destiny as to the vicissitudes, sorrows, and afflictions of life, as to the separation by death of the soul from the body, as to the termination of man's probation on earth ; but not the same destiny as to eternity. Death is the termination of equality of destiny. Death consigns the body to the grave, and the soul of each individual to incipient happiness or misery. IMMEDIATELY after death, the rich man lifted up his eyes in torment. IMMEDIATELY after death, Lazarus reposed on Abraham's bosom. To the penitent thief Christ graciously promised, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.' 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, IMMEDIATELY, PERFECTLY (*ἀπῳρτε*): Yea, saith the Spirit, for that they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them' (*Apocalypse* xiv. 13). Life is the seed-time for eternity. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

## VERSES 17 AND 18.

I hated life, my past life of apostasy from God, and of conformity to the love of this evil world, and I hated all the magnificent works I had erected from pride and ostentation, but not to the glory of God.

## VERSE 18.

*The man who shall be after me*—my son and successor Rehoboam.

## VERSES 19, 20, AND 21.

Solomon anticipated that his successor would act as men heretofore generally had acted, namely, make a bad use of the splendid inheritance, and that thus all the fruits of his super-eminent wisdom and scientific labour would ultimately be dissipated. What Solomon foretold, Rehoboam fulfilled. By his impolitic severity he alienated the affections of the ten

tribes, and caused the dismemberment of his kingdom, according to the prediction of Ahijah; and by his sin against God he caused the invasion of his kingdom by Shishak, king of Egypt, and the spoliation of his royal palace and of the temple of Jehovah, built and dedicated by his father Solomon.

VERSES 22 AND 23.

The expression UNDER THE SUN limits the vanity and unsatisfactoriness here predicated to secular labours resulting from secular motives, and performed for secular ends. Works springing from faith, done with a single eye to the glory of God, to promote the spiritual or temporal good of man, will never lose their reward of grace. 'Behold, I come quickly,' says Christ, 'and My reward is with Me, to give to every man according as his work shall be' (*Apocalypse* xxii. 12).

VERSE 24.

Man's real everlasting happiness does not consist in eating and drinking, nor in physical, nor even in intellectual enjoyments. God, whose mercies are over all His works, hath conferred on the sons of men intellectual and physical enjoyments to sweeten their time-state here below, and to stimulate their gratitude, that they may never forget the hand from whence their mercies flow. Secular blessings, both intellectual and corporeal, are alike conceded to the just and to the unjust, to him that feareth God, and to him that feareth Him not. They are temporal; they are evanescent. And by God's children, after the example of the holy Patriarch Job, they ever should be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.

VERSE 26.

God giveth wisdom to make wise unto salvation, and imparts spiritual knowledge, and joy, and peace in believing, to all whom the Lord our God shall call. But he assigneth toil to amass and heap up to the incorrigible sinner, to the apostate who abideth in the state of nature's darkness, whose sins have not been forgiven, whose person has not been justified, whose soul has not been saved. The travail of this sinner to amass and heap up is vanity and vexation of spirit.

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V.

CHAPTER III.—VERSES 1-15.

God's foreknowledge and predestination of the human race, of the birth and death of each individual, and of every occurrence which shall befall man in his passage through the quicksands of time to the ocean of eternity. Immutability of the Divine counsels contrasted with the mutability and vicissitudes of man, and with the constant revolution of all things human. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world. 'All the wheels of providence subserve the purposes of grace.' 'God is a rock, His work is perfect.' Joy and peace in believing result from God's sovereignty in the administration of human affairs felt and realized by faith in the heart. All the past acts of human hands, and all the secrets of human hearts, will be revealed on the great day of judgment, when God



will rectify the misjudgments of man, will recompense His afflicted saints, and will render to every man according to his works.

- 1 To every individual there is an appointed time,  
And there is a time for every purpose under heaven :
- 2 A time for birth, and a time for death :  
A time to plant, and a time to root up that which has been planted :
- 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal :  
A time to break down, and a time to build up :
- 4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh :  
A time to mourn, and a time to dance :
- 5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together :  
A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing :
- 6 A time to get, and a time to lose :  
A time to keep, and a time to cast away :
- 7 A time to rend, and a time to sew together :  
A time to be silent, and a time to speak :
- 8 A time to love, and a time to hate :  
A time for war, and a time for peace :
9. What is the profit thereof? The Creator Himself in whomsoever  
He worketh.
10. I have considered the toil which God hath assigned to the children  
of Adam to toil therein,
- 11 Everything He ordaineth is beautiful in its season ;  
Moreover, He hath imparted His intelligence to their heart,  
Without which no man can find out the work  
Which God doeth from the beginning to the end.
- 12 I discerned that there was no happiness for them,  
But for a man cheerfully to do good in his life :
- 13 Yea, moreover, that every man should eat and drink,  
And should experience delight in all his labour :  
This is the gift of God.
- 14 I discerned that all which God doeth,  
The same shall continue for ever :  
To it can no man add,  
And from it can none subtract ;  
And God so doeth that men should fear before Him.
- 15 That which is now was long since,

And that which is to be was long since ;  
And God will disclose the past.

## VERSE 1.

God's foreknowledge and predestination of man are explicitly stated by Solomon in this verse, and in chapter vi. 10. This predestination is an emanation of love and mercy, being God's election to life everlasting,—sovereign, gratuitous, immutable, and unmerited. Few, if any, believers exist, whose experience does not accord with that of John Newton: 'If God had not chosen me, I should never have chosen Him.' Christ authoritatively says, 'Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.' So entire is the innate depravity of the hearts of all men, and so universally is the whole human race spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, that I cannot understand how there can be salvation in time, unless there has been election in eternity. Moreover, predestination to life exalts the love of God, humbles the pride of man, and excludes all boasting. But predestination to life does not warrant the inference of predestination to condemnation, which many deduce therefrom. Predestination to condemnation is not revealed in Scripture, and is not asserted in the Thirty-nine Articles. It was, indeed, maintained by Augustine, by Calvin, by other Reformers, and by several post-Reformation writers, and was embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith. *Humanum est errare*. But let the magnates of our Church beware how they assail the Kirk of Scotland for excess of faith. What multitudes of our Bishops, Priests, and Deacons have untruthfully subscribed their assent and consent to the 17th Article, the doctrine of which was as alien from their belief as the adventures of Don Quixote or the marvels of Baron Munchausen! If the Kirk of Scotland believed too much, this clerical multitude believed too little. They who live in glass houses would be wise not to throw stones at their neighbours. Perversions to Papal Rome have been one characteristic of the present age. Can one clerical pervert be adduced, who believed the 17th Article in its literal and grammatical sense? The doctrine of the 17th Article, however misrepresented, exploded, and maligned, is conservative of truth, and preservative against error, but not essential to salvation.

## VERSE 4.

The practice of dancing in Judea was essentially different from the practice of dancing in modern times. The Book of Ecclesiastes was PRIMARILY addressed to the Jews; hence the word DANCING in this verse must be interpreted in the same sense wherein it was practised and understood by God's ancient people.

'Dancing, which with us is confined to the purposes of recreation, formed among ancient nations, and especially those of the East, an element of religious worship. There is a natural tendency to exhibit strong feelings of the mind by energetic movements of the body; and this tendency is most powerful among the impulsive inhabitants of warmer climates. Among the Jews, in early times, dancing was associated with a religious festival (*Judges* xxi. 19); but after the reign of David, this practice seems to have declined, since dancing is not again mentioned in Scripture under such circumstances.'—Cassell's *Bible Dictionary*.

'From a collation of all passages in Scripture in reference to dancing, it may be inferred—

1. That dancing was a religious act, both in true and also in idol worship.
2. That it was practised exclusively on joyful occasions, such as national festivals or great victories.
3. That it was performed on such great occasions only by one of the sexes.

4. That it was performed usually in the day-time, in the open air, in highways, fields, and groves.
5. THAT MEN WHO PERVERTED DANCING FROM A SACRED USE TO PURPOSES OF AMUSEMENT WERE DEEMED INFAMOUS.
6. THAT NO INSTANCES OF DANCING ARE FOUND UPON RECORD IN THE BIBLE IN WHICH THE TWO SEXES UNITED IN THE EXERCISE, EITHER AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP OR AMUSEMENT.

*Lastly.* That there are no instances upon record in the Bible of social dancing for amusement, except that of the “vain fellows,” void of shame, alluded to by Michal; of the religious families described by Job, which produced increased impiety and ended in destruction; and of Herodias, which terminated in the rash vow of Herod and the murder of John the Baptist.—Eadie’s *Biblical Encyclopædia*.

‘The practice of what is called promiscuous dancing—dancing performed conjointly by men and women—appears to have been nearly, if not altogether, unknown in the East.’—Fairbairn’s *Imperial Bible Dictionary*.

The Hebrew verb employed by Solomon in this verse, rendered to DANCE, occurs nine times in the Hebrew Scriptures, but only signifies to DANCE in three other texts besides this.

#### VERSE 9.

What is the profit resulting to man from these divinely-ordained fluctuations and vicissitudes of mundane affairs?—The manifestation of God to the believer’s soul, as Creator and sovereign Administrator of the universe, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him our God and Father, even the inhabitation of God by the Spirit, who worketh in the believer to will and to do according to His pleasure. These vicissitudes of life, sanctified by the Spirit, convince of sin, bring to remembrance past sins of omission and commission, produce humiliation and contrition of soul, wean from the world, and guide to God.

#### VERSE 11.

God created the world with infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. God administers the government of the world by the unseen intervention of His providence to fulfil to His people His everlasting covenant in all things ordered and sure. He doeth all things well. Whatever mars the beauty of creation is the effect of the fall of man, and of sinfulness resulting from the fall.

The Hebrew word, rendered WORLD in the authorized version, signifies in the Arabic language INTELLIGENCE, and would be so understood in the kingdom of Sheba, in Ophir, and throughout the whole peninsula of Arabia, annually coasted and visited for commercial purposes by the merchant ships of Solomon. Gaab, Spohn, Hitzig, and Moses Stuart, all render the Hebrew term by INTELLIGENCE, and affirm that this is the only meaning appropriate to this passage. Moses Stuart adds, ‘that we may resort to a kindred dialect, as to the Arabic here, to illustrate the meaning of a word which common Hebrew analogy does not explain, is conceded on all hands, and is often done. There are a goodly number of words in Hebrew, which are best illustrated in this way.’ This argument is a full justification, on Moses Stuart’s own admission, of the proposed interpretation of the term KHOHELETH by THE REPENTANT INVALID, the signification thereof in the Arabic language.

The word HIS is not expressed, but implied, in the original by the prefix of two definite articles to the word rendered INTELLIGENCE.

## VERSES 12 AND 13.

Solomon, though near the close of his earthly career, and bowed down with bodily infirmity and penitential sorrow for his past apostasy, nevertheless recommends to God's children equanimity of mind and cheerfulness of disposition in the daily transactions of life, and in the dedication of their talents unto God.

## VERSE 15.

In Cranmer's Bible, 1549, and the Bishops' Bible, 1595, the last line of the verse is rendered: 'GOD RESTORETH AGAYNE THE THYNGE THAT WAS PASTE.' This version gives an excellent sense, and admirably accords with the context. It seems derived from the Vulgate, which see in Critical Appendix.

## VI.

## CHAPTER III. VERSE 16 TO CHAPTER IV. VERSE 6.

PREVALENCE of wickedness and injustice on the earth. Universality of sin, and of death the punishment of sin. Separation by death of the soul from the body. Immortality of the soul, and its return to God who gave it.

Oppressions exercised in foreign nations render to many death preferable to life in respect to the body and the things of time and sense.

Jealousy and envy are the usual concomitants of successful industry. Contentment with the lot Providence appoints is man's true wisdom, and confers greater happiness than excessive exertion or baneful indolence.

16 MOREOVER also I saw under the sun the place of judgment, where  
was wickedness,

And the place of justice, where was wickedness.

17 I said in my mind,

God will judge the righteous and the wicked,

Because He hath ordained an appointed time for every purpose  
and for every work.

18 I said in my mind concerning the estate of the children of Adam

That they should seek after God, and know that in themselves  
they are beasts.

19 For the destiny of the children of Adam is also the destiny of beasts.

There is even one destiny for them :

As the one dieth, so dieth the other,

Yea, there is one breath (of life) to all,

So that man hath not pre-eminence above a beast,

For both are vanity.



- 20 All go to one place,  
All sprang from the dust,  
And all return to dust again.
- 21 Who understandeth the spirit of the children of Adam ?  
Doth it ascend upward ?  
And (who understandeth) the spirit of beasts ?  
Doth it descend downward to the earth ?
- 22 Wherefore I perceived that there is nothing better, than that man  
should delight himself in his works,  
Because this is his allotted portion.  
For who can bring him back to see that which after him shall come  
to pass ?

## IV.

- 1 So I returned to the contemplation of all the oppressions  
Which have been done under the sun :  
And behold the tears of the oppressed,  
And there was none to comfort them,  
And power was on the side of their oppressors,  
And there were none to depose them.
- 2 Therefore I esteemed (the state of) the dead who had long since died,  
Better than that of the living who are now alive,
- 3 And better than both of them (the state of) him who hath not yet  
existed,  
Who hath not seen the working of wickedness which hath been  
wrought under the sun.
- 4 Again I considered all labour and every successful work,  
That for this a man is envied of his neighbour,  
This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.
- 5 The fool foldeth his hands together,  
And consumeth his own flesh.
- 6 Better is a handful with quietness  
Than two handfuls with toil and vexation of spirit.

## CHAPTER III. VERSES 18, 19 AND 20.

Men are compared to beasts, and are said to have the same destiny as beasts, in respect to their time-state here below, in respect to the brevity and transientness of their lives, and the certainty of their deaths. In regard to brevity of life and certainty of death man has

no pre-eminence over beasts. ‘Man, being in honour, abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.’

## VERSE 21.

Solomon here clearly intimates a distinctive difference between the spirit of man and the spirit of beasts; between the spirit of man, which is immortal, and returns to God who gave it (xii. 7), and the spirit of beasts, which is terrestrial, and returns to earth. Solomon does not here define the locality of spirits separated from their frail tenements of clay. He defines not the locality of PARADISE, where the human soul of Christ and the soul of the repentant thief met on the day of the crucifixion, nor the locality of ABRAHAM’S BOSOM, the consociation of the father of the faithful and of Lazarus, nor the locality of the place of torments from whence the rich man entreated Abraham’s intercession. Not a ray of light is thrown by this verse on the intermediate state of departed spirits in the interval between the severance of body and soul by death, and the reunion of body and soul by the resurrection. The question is asked, but the answer is not given. ‘By the “ASCENDING UPWARDS” of the children of Adam, I understand simply subsisting and retaining immortality, just as “DESCENDING DOWNWARDS” seems to me to mean lapsing, falling, becoming lost.’—Calvin’s *Psychopannychia*, p. 462.

The distinction established by Solomon between the spirit of man and the spirit of beasts, affirms the immortality of the souls of all men, both saved and lost. The sempiternity of the worm that never dieth, and of the fire that never shall be quenched, hath been assailed in these last days perilous to the souls of men. This soul-destroying heresy, revived by the intellectual Essayist of Bristol, spreads like wild-fire in visible Churches, Episcopal and Presbyterian. But if future punishment be not eternal, then glory is not eternal, heaven is not eternal, God is not eternal, and our hope in Christ is in this life only, and we are of all men most miserable. To deny this article of revelation is to contradict the truth of God, and the advocates of this denial merit that which Jehovah hath affirmed, and they have blasphemously denied.

‘Man was born

To die, nor aught exceeds, in this respect,  
The vilest brute: both transient, frail, and vain  
Draw the same breath, alike grow old, decay,  
And then expire: both to one grave descend,  
There blended lie, to native dust resolved—  
The nobler part of man, ’tis true, survives  
This frail corporeal frame; BUT WHO REGARDS  
THE DIFFERENCE?’—*Khoheleth*.

## VERSE 22.

‘Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart’ (*Ps.* xxxii. 11); ‘Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous’ (*Ps.* xxxiii. 1); ‘Let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God’ (*Ps.* lxviii. 3); ‘Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart: Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous’ (*Ps.* xevii. 11-12); ‘Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice. Be careful for nothing’ (*Phil.* iv. 4-6).

Joy, equanimity, and tranquillity of mind constitute the portion which God has graciously

bestowed upon His people during their pilgrimage in this world, from which death, common to them and to the brute creation, will finally remove them. After death they will receive their reward of grace, that glory which eye hath not seen, which ear hath not heard, and which it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Who can raise the dead to life? Who can impart to the dead the knowledge of what shall occur after their dissolution? This seems to imply that the dead have no cognisance of human affairs. See note on ix. 5-6.

## CHAPTER IV. VERSE 1.

Oppression in Judea Solomon possessed the power and the will to repress with iron hand. The oppressions condemned in this verse and in chap. v. 8 were those perpetrated in foreign countries beyond his regal control. Of the oppressions practised under the sun, foremost stand the unjust expatriation and final extirpation of Pagan aborigines by civilized man. The windward islands of the West Indies were once densely peopled by the red Caribbee Indians, of whom not one survivor now exists, not one vestige now remains. The Pagan aborigines of the other islands in the West Indies, once so numerous, are now extinct. Of negroes, myriads have been exiled from Africa by slave-dealers, *alias* men-stealers, and have PREMATURELY perished under the curse of slavery. The prophecy of Noah foretold God's retributive justice, but does not justify man's iniquity. Dark as is the picture of the oppression of Pagans in time, far darker are the lineaments of its results in eternity. Leaving out of consideration moral Paganism, what will be the eternal state of Pagans immersed in every vice and polluted with every iniquity which can disgrace humanity, many of whom have been hurried to PREMATURE death by European cupidity and avarice? Jehovah is a holy God, heaven is a holy place,—none unholy can enter there. Yet the soul of the Pagan is as sempiternal as the soul of the Christian. What then will be the final destiny of adult sinful Pagan idolaters, whom St. Paul pronounces to be 'WITHOUT EXCUSE,' to many of whom no revelation has ever been vouchsafed, and who have never heard of that only name whereby man can be saved? The responsibility of men-stealers, persecutors, and murderers of Pagans, by whatever name they may be called, or whatever religion they may profess, is as clear as the sun at noon-day. But the deep mystery of Pagan responsibility who can fathom? Jehovah Himself will justify His ways with man—

‘Because He will bring every work into judgment,  
With respect to every secret matter,  
Whether it be good, or whether it be evil.’

## VERSES 2 AND 3.

Solomon's alleged preference of death to life, and of him that never existed to the living, is restricted by the words UNDER THE SUN, and has reference only to this world, to the things of time and sense. Thus interpreted, it accords well with chap. ix. 4. Any other interpretation would be contradictory to the statement of St. Paul: 'I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us' (*Rom.* viii. 18).

## VERSE 4.

To envy and malign others for having done right works is right down diabolism.

## VERSE 6.

Contentment and placid assiduity in the daily duties of life are extolled by Solomon above envious and competing toil on the one hand, and above sloth and blamable inactivity on the other. ‘Diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,’ is the sum and substance of this lesson inculcated by Solomon, of this warning against envy, idleness, and disquietude of mind.

## VII.

## CHAPTER IV.—VERSES 7-12.

CONDEMNATION of the solitary avaricious miser, who heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.

Commendation of marriage, of social intercourse, and of fraternal consociation.

7 I AGAIN contemplated a vanity under the sun.

8 There is a single man, and none connected with him :

Yea, he hath neither child nor brother,

Yet is there no end of all his toil ;

Neither are his eyes satisfied with riches ;

Neither (saith he) For whom do I toil and bereave myself of good ?

This also is vanity, yea, it is a wicked work.

9 Two are better off than one,

Because they have a good reward for their labour.

10 For if they fall, the one will raise up his fellow,

But woe to him who is alone when he falleth,

For there is not a second person to raise him up again.

11 Also, if two lie together, then they shall be warm :

But to one alone how shall there be warmth ?

12 And should any one overpower one (of the two) when alone,

The two shall stand firm against him,

And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

## VERSES 7 AND 8.

A striking illustration of this portraiture of real life, so graphically drawn by Solomon, occurred to my own observation. In the parish of Holwell, in the county of Somerset, where I long resided, died a wealthy penurious farmer, who left neither relative nor near



connexion. I was present at his funeral. When the rector of Holwell had concluded the burial service—a service most sublime in itself, but most inappropriate to him over whose remains it had been read,—whilst the mourners and bystanders encircled the grave, and pensive and silent looked down on the coffin, a Wesleyan preacher said, in an under tone audible to all, ‘He heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.’ These words, so fitly spoken, penetrated every heart. In deep melancholy all retired from the grave of this wretched miser, who in the whole course of a very long life was never known to have done one act of charity, nor, beyond the purchase of one gold ring and one solitary volume, to have expended an iota on self-gratification, beyond what was essential to the sustentation of life.

## VERSE 9.

‘It is not good that man should be alone’ (*Genesis* ii. 18).

‘What so sweet,  
As the connubial state, ordained by Heaven,  
Source of domestic joys, where souls unite  
In mutual love ! Did not th’ all-bounteous Lord,  
Who knows our frailties and our wants, foresee  
That man, amidst ev’n Paradise itself,  
Still wanted something to complete his bliss,  
And therefore gave an helpmate, who might share  
His toils, with soft endearments soothe his cares,  
If cares he had, and double all his joys ?  
Such are the fruits of social life ! And such  
E’en now the marriage state attend.  
Hence chiefly let the chaste endearing wife,  
Best, sweetest gift of Heaven, delight thy soul,  
Nor ever from her part ; to her alone  
Let thy affections be confined.’—*Akheleth*.

## VIII.

## CHAPTER IV.—VERSES 13-16.

UNPOPULARITY of King Solomon in his latter days, as contrasted with the popular expectation of Jeroboam’s reign. Solomon’s prophetic foresight, that the popularity of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, would be transient, and that in the next generation, during the reign of his son Nadab, his throne would be subverted, and his family extirpated.

- 13 ‘AN indigent but wise youth is better than an old and foolish king,  
Who hath made known that he will be no more admonished,  
14 Even though he goes forth from the house of exiles to reign,  
Because that in his kingdom he was born a poor man.’

- 15 I have seen all the living, who walk under the sun,  
 (Taking part) with the youth, with the next in succession, who shall  
 stand in his place.
- 16 There is no end of all the people, of all above whom he is,  
 Yet their successors shall take no delight in him,  
 Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

## VERSES 13 AND 14.

The indigent but wise youth was 'Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's SERVANT, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king' (Solomon) (1 *Kings* xi. 26). These two verses were the rebellious clamour of many Jews towards the conclusion of the reign of Solomon, and evidence the then rising spirit of insurrection against Solomon, especially among the ten tribes.

## VERSE 15.

'When all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we any inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. So Israel rebelled against the house of David to this day' (1 *Kings* xii. 16-19), taking part with the youth Jeroboam, who was next in actual succession to Solomon over Israel, reigning after him over the ten tribes.

## VERSE 16.

'Go, tell Jeroboam, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till all be gone. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the Lord hath spoken it' (1 *Kings* xiv. 7, 10, and 11). 'And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him (Nadab, the son of Jeroboam), and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead. And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam, he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him' (1 *Kings* xv. 27, 28, and 29).

## XI.

## CHAPTER V.—VERSES 1-7.

INJUNCTION of circumspection and profound reverence in public worship. The oblation of praise and prayer and contrite confession of sin is an essential part of devotion never to be omitted. Addresses to the Deity should be in language select, flowing from the heart, and without vain repetitions.

All vows to God, especially vows of self-dedication, should be made with great deliberation, and be carefully considered, because, whatever man vows to his Maker he is obligated to fulfil.

- 1 KEEP thy foot when thou enterest into the house of God ;  
For drawing nigh to hear is better than sacrifice, the oblation of  
fools ;  
For they know not to be contrite.
- 2 Be not rash with thy mouth,  
Nor let thy heart be in haste to utter a word before God ;  
For God is in heaven and thou art upon earth ;  
Therefore let thy words be few.
- 3 Truly a dream is associated with a multitude of incidents ;  
So is the voice of the fool with a multitude of words.
- 4 When thou vowest a vow unto God,  
Defer not to perform it,  
For He hath no pleasure in fools :  
Perform that which thou hast vowed.
- 5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow,  
Than that thou shouldest vow, and not perform it.
- 6 Suffer not thy mouth to bring punishment on thy flesh ;  
Neither say thou before the Angel that it was an oversight,  
Wherefore should God be provoked by thy voice,  
And blast the work of thy hands ?
- 7 Truly in a multitude of dreams, so in many words, are there vanities ;  
Therefore fear thou God.

## VERSE 1.

The sacrifices enjoined by the Mosaic ritual were designed to be a symbolic teaching to the Jewish people, significant and premonitory unto them of good things to come. The whole ritual prefigured the promised Messiah, and was given to the Jews to be their pedagogue or scholastic conductor to Christ, the great prophet and teacher of His people of every age and every clime. On some of these sacrifices the offerers were permitted to feast in whole or in part. Solomon's admonition to the worshippers in the Temple was an injunction to offer the oblation of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, from their hearts ; and in their sacrificial feasts in the outer courts to have their minds intent on the inward spiritual grace rather than on the outward visible signs. Solomon's admonition is a solemn warning to all Jews and Christians to enter God's house with preparedness of mind, devotion, and reverential awe, and to offer to Him heartfelt oblations of prayer and praise.

‘ When ye approach God’s altar, on your lips  
 Set strictest guard, and let your thoughts be pure,  
 Fervent and recollected : thus prepared,  
 Send up the silent breathings of your souls  
 Submissive to His will ; for He looks down  
 From heaven, and with paternal care prevents  
 Our real wants, before we ask.’—*Khohelceth*.

The Peschito-Syriac version renders this verse : ‘ Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God, and draw nigh to hear : this is better than the sacrificial victims which fools offer, for they know not to do that which is right.’

The Hebrew word rendered TO BE CONTRITE has the same signification in chap. vii. 3, namely, dejection and contrition of countenance.

#### VERSE 2.

Christ exemplified the exhortation ‘ Let thy words be few’ in the beautiful form of prayer He gave to His disciples—a UNIVERSAL prayer, designed for all nations, languages, tongues, and people—a DAILY prayer for DAILY bread for soul and for body—a SPECIAL prayer for all who by realizing faith can call God, Abba, Father, being His children by regeneration, adoption, and grace.

Solomon does not condemn ALL long prayers, for Christ our exemplar prayed all night ; but careless heartless prayers, prayers for ostentation, vain repetitions of Paternosters and Ave Marias by tale.

#### VERSES 3 AND 7.

The dreams which are here termed ‘ vanities’ are simply and exclusively the erratic phantasies of the mind during sleep, when the imagination is awake and the judgment slumbers, and are carefully to be distinguished from admonitory and premonitory dreams and apparitions. That premonitory dreams and visions are not the result of any return or re-appearance of the dead to the living, see the Preface, and note on chap. ix. 5 and 6.

#### VERSE 4.

The spiritual Israel are obligated by baptismal, confirmation, and sacramental vows to self-dedication unto God, to consecrate all the faculties of their minds and all the members of their bodies unto Him, whose they are and whom they serve.

#### VERSE 6.

The ANGEL of the everlasting covenant ; THE ANGEL who spake to Moses out of the burning bush ; THE ANGEL who, in the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud, conducted Israel out of Egypt ; Jehovah THE ANGEL, both God and man, the Mighty God, the Father of the Everlasting Age, the Prince of Peace ; THE WORD OF GOD, THE WISDOM OF GOD, THE MESSENGER OF GOD, THE MEDIATOR between God and man ; THE PERSONATOR OF JEHOVAH, whereby Jehovah, invisible in His own nature, in human nature appeared to man. Thus Jehovah manifested Himself to Adam, Cain, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Hagar, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Manoah, etc. Wherever in the Old Testament THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, or THE ANGEL OF GOD, is recorded as appearing to man, that Angel is God Himself in human form.

According to correct construction, and the parallelism of Hebrew poetry, THE ANGEL in the former hemistich, and GOD in the latter hemistich, must signify one and the same person.



THE ANGEL here named is no priest nor priestly messenger coming to claim the eleemosynary offering, but God Himself, the Second Person of the eternal Trinity, the man Christ Jesus, He who is the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render, BEFORE GOD.

## X.

## CHAPTER V. VERSE 8 TO CHAPTER VI. VERSE 9.

OPPRESSION is a dark page in providence, calling for the exercise of faith and patience. It is some alleviation to reflect that the ruler is subject to the superior jurisdiction of his monarch, and that both monarch and ruler are not only responsible to, but under the providential control of, Him by whom kings reign and princes decree justice.

Avarice chains down the heart to the things of time and sense, despoils man of the lawful enjoyments of life, expels the love of God from the soul, and verifies the Divine sentence, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.'

Contentment of mind, resulting from fiducial reliance on God's sovereignty in the administration of human affairs, is man's highest wisdom and truest happiness. It realizes the faithfulness of Jehovah, humbles the pride of man, alleviates the sorrows of time, and devolves our cares, sorrows, and conflicts on Him who doeth all things well.

8 IF thou shalt see in a country oppression of the poor, and perversion of judgment and justice,

Be not dismayed concerning the matter ;

For one higher than him in authority overlooketh ;

And the most High Ones are supreme over them and over the eminent of the earth.

9 He, the King of the earth, is to be served above all.

10 He who loveth money will not be satisfied with money,

Nor he who loveth wealth with its accumulation.

This also is vanity.

11 With the increase of goods, they who consume them are increased,

And what advantage is there to the owners thereof,

Saving the beholding of them with their eyes ?

12 Sweet is the sleep of a labourer, whether he eat little or much ;

But the abundance of the rich man suffers him not to sleep.

- 13 There is a grievous evil I have seen under the sun :  
Riches treasured up for the owner thereof unto his harm,
- 14 And these riches perish through some adverse traffic,  
And he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand.
- 15 As he came forth from the womb of his mother,  
Naked shall he again depart as he came ;  
And when he dieth, there is nothing in his hand which he hath  
acquired by his labour.
- 16 This also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he  
depart ;  
And what profit hath he that he hath laboured for the wind ?
- 17 Yea, all his days he eateth in gloom,  
And in much sorrow, and infirmities, and indignation.
- 18 Behold, I have considered that it is good, that it is comely,  
That a man should eat, and drink, and experience delight in all his  
labour,  
Wherein he laboureth under the sun,  
During the number of the days of his life which God hath assigned  
him :  
Truly this is his allotted portion.
- 19 Yea, to every man to whom God hath given riches and wealth,  
And hath enabled him to eat thereof,  
And to sustain his allotted portion, and to rejoice in his labour ;  
This is the very gift of God.
- 20 Let him remember that the days of his life will not be many,  
That God, by the joy of his heart, answers his prayers.

## VI.

- 1 There is an afflictive evil which I have seen under the sun,  
And heavily does it press upon man :
- 2 A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour,  
And he wanteth nothing for himself of all which he desireth,  
Yet God enableth him not to eat thereof,  
But a stranger eateth it.  
This is vanity, yea, it is a grievous affliction.
- 3 If a man shall beget an hundred children,  
And shall live many years,

- And many shall be the days of his years ;  
 Yet himself shall have no enjoyment of that prosperity,  
 And moreover to him there shall be no burial :  
 I say, an untimely birth is better off than he.  
 4 For it cometh forth in vain, and goeth away in darkness,  
 And its name is buried in darkness,  
 5 Moreover, it hath not seen the sun, nor had any perception.  
 To it there is more tranquillity than to him,  
 6 Yea, though he should live a thousand years twice told,  
 And enjoy no prosperity.  
 Do they not both go to the same place ?  
 7 All the labour of man is for his mouth,  
 And yet desire cannot be satisfied.  
 8 Then what advantage is there to the wise man over the fool ?  
 What advantage to the indigent man, who hath understanding to  
 struggle against life ?  
 9 That which the eyes behold is better than the wandering of desire.  
 This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

## VERSES 8 AND 9.

The king is supreme over all in authority and office under him, and will overlook them, and bring them to account. The triune Jehovah (called by Solomon, THE MOST HIGH ONES, and THE KING OF THE EARTH) are supreme over angels and men, over all kings and all their subordinates, and will visit their transgressions by retributive justice in time, or by never-ending punishment in eternity. A king cannot rule a country, nor reign over a people, without subordinates in office, whose evil deeds he may be ignorant of, or, if he know them, may not possess the power of prevention, or of punishment. Witness David's dying charge to Solomon (1 *Kings* ii. 9). No government, civil or ecclesiastical, is to be censured because it is not faultless in ALL its details. Perfection of government will never be attained, until the will of God shall be done universally and perfectly ON EARTH, as it is now done universally and perfectly in heaven, until the saints shall be kings and priests, and reign with Christ UPON THE EARTH, until the twelve apostles shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

## VERSE 10.

The progressive baneful effect of the love of money on the human heart, impelling it to increase of worldliness, and to increasing apostasy from God's word and will, is painfully exemplified in Balaam, Judas Iscariot, and Demas. Balaam, the unregenerate prophet of Jehovah to the Gentile world, twice courteously received the messengers of Balak, the king of the idolatrous Moabites, and twice sought Divine direction concerning their message, though he foreknew that their solicitations were contradictory to God's eternal, immutable decree. He covetously desired, and daringly essayed, to curse whom God had not cursed, and to defy whom God had not defied. He counselled Moab to tempt Israel to fornication and idolatry, and he perished amidst God's enemies, without hope and without salvation, and with a full

presentiment of eternal condemnation, according to his own prediction: 'I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not NIGH.' He loved gold more than God, the wages of divination more than the path of duty. Judas Iscariot, one of the delegated twelve, the constant companion of Christ in His ministerial circuits, a witness of His stupendous miracles of mercy, cognisant that the winds and the waves obeyed Him, and that all nature was subject to his control, sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver, and when he saw Him led as a lamb to the slaughter, as a sheep dumb before his shearers, hanged himself in self-despair, and went to his own place, the place of perdition. From the beginning he was a thief. He loved the wages of iniquity. This apostate apostle preached to others the gospel which he had never experimentally felt in his own heart. He did many wonderful works. To him Christ will say at the last day: 'Depart from Me, thou worker of iniquity.' Demas was one of the earliest preachers of Christianity. Of Demas, St. Paul writes: 'Demas has forsaken me, having loved the present world.' 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' Of all such backsliding apostates, the Spirit emphatically declares: 'If, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb: The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire' (2 *Peter* ii. 20-22.)

It is a question of grave import, whether traffic in Church preferment FOR LUCRE'S SAKE is not a branch of that sin which characterized Balaam and Judas Iscariot. Cures of souls are disposed of by the auctioneer's hammer. Patrons sell, clergymen buy, newspapers insert advertisements of sale, and church agents negotiate the unhallowed bargains. The populations of those cures of souls are bought and sold FOR LUCRE'S SAKE as veritably as sheep in their pen or cattle in their stalls. Has not traffic in the souls of men been legalized by the three estates of the realm, and sanctioned by the silence of the Episcopate? From all merchandise of the souls of men, SPEEDILY, good Lord, deliver this Church and nation!

#### VERSE 15.

This translation of the last hemistich of this verse is an accurate representation of the original Hebrew, and simply states that the destitute man at his death had nothing in his hand, possession or power. The authorized version manifestly cannot be right, because it implies, or at least seems to imply, that the dead may carry away something from this world to another. In no other text of the Old Testament is this Hebrew verb in the same conjugation rendered TO CARRY AWAY. But every Hebrew Lexicon I possess affirms one of its significations to be, TO DEPART, or TO DIE.

#### VERSES 18 AND 19.

'What thou hast,  
With cheerfulness enjoy, and as becomes  
Thy station: reap the fruit, whilst Heaven permits,  
Of all thy honest labours; and since life  
Is but a span, let not superfluous cares  
Or gloomy thoughts contract its narrow space;  
For 'tis thy portion here. This sage advice  
Reason and nature dictate.'—*Khoheloth*.



## VERSE 20.

God answers the prayers of His people by causing all things, even the most adverse, to work together for the spiritual and eternal good of all who love Him, of all who are the called according to His purpose, of all who are His children by adoption and grace.

## CHAPTER VI. VERSE 3.

The Hebrew word rendered BURIAL signifies also in several texts BURIAL-PLACE. The meaning is, that the individual has no funeral obsequies, none of the pomp and ceremonial usually practised in Oriental funerals.

## VERSE 6.

*The same place*—the state of the dead, that bourne from whence no traveller returneth.

## VERSE 7.

‘In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread’ (*Genesis* iii. 19).

## VERSE 8.

What advantage has the one over the other in respect to enjoyment of life and exemption from death? The same mundane vicissitudes, and the same ultimate destiny befall both, and are common to both.

## VERSE 9.

Reality is preferable to castles in the air, the phantom of restless minds. This maxim of Solomon should teach all God’s children to be content with their allotted portion; not to be anxious about futurity, but to trust in the Lord Jehovah, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

The vicissitudes of human affairs, and the occurrence of the same destiny to the wise and to the unwise, to him who feareth God and to him who feareth Him not, constitute the vanity and vexation of spirit experienced and declared by Solomon.

## XI.

## CHAPTER VI. VERSE 10 TO CHAPTER VII. VERSE 14.

God’s eternal predestination of man. Man’s duty of implicit submission to God’s sovereignty in grace and providence.

Many events apparently calamitous are essential to man’s real good, and are designed by an overruling providence, through the sanctification of the Spirit, to edify the soul, and to fulfil God’s gracious purposes of love and mercy. Contentment, resignation to God’s will, and patient continuance in well-doing, are our

required duties, and are essential to growth in grace, communion with our Maker, and preparedness for death and judgment.

- 10 WHATEVER occurs was long ago called by name,  
And man was foreknown what he should be,  
So that he is unable to contend with Him who is more mighty  
than he.
- 11 Seeing there be many things which increase vanity,  
What is the advantage of them to man ?
- 12 Who indeed knoweth what is good for man in life  
During the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow ?  
Who, verily, can tell man what his futurity shall be under the  
sun ?

## VII.

- 1 A good name is better than fragrant perfume,  
And the day of death than the day of one's birth.
- 2 It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house  
of feasting,  
Because that is the end of all men,  
And the living will lay it to his heart.
- 3 Better is sorrow than laughter,  
Because by dejection of countenance the heart is made better.
- 4 The heart of wise men is in the house of mourning,  
But the heart of fools is in the house of merriment.
- 5 It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man  
Than for a man to listen to the song of fools :
- 6 For as the crackling of thorns under a pot,  
Such is the laughter of the fool :  
This also is vanity.
- 7 Surely oppression woundeth a wise man,  
And bribery corrupteth the heart.
- 8 Better is the end of a law-suit than the beginning thereof :  
Better is forbearance of spirit than haughtiness of spirit.
- 9 Be not hasty in thy spirit to anger,  
For anger resteth in the bosom of fools.
- 10 Say not thou, Why is it that former days were better than these ?  
For thou dost not inquire concerning this with wisdom.
- 11 Wisdom is as good as an inheritance,

Yea, a greater good to them who see the sun.

12 For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence :

But the superiority of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them who have it.

13 Contemplate the work of God ;

Whether any one can make straight that which He hath made crooked.

14 In the day of prosperity be occupied in that which is good,

And in the day of adversity meditate :

God hath indeed appointed the one to balance the other,

In order that no man shall at all discover what his futurity shall be.

#### VERSE 10.

The finite cannot contend with the Infinite. He whose days are as a shadow cannot contend with Him who is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting. Man, who sees through a glass darkly, cannot contend with the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Jehovah, whose predeterminate counsel and foreknowledge govern all things in heaven and in earth.

#### CHAPTER VII. VERSE 1.

The day of death is better than the day of birth to him whose good name is better than fragrant perfume ; whose sins are forgiven ; who hath been justified by the righteousness of Messiah ; who hath been born from above, having been baptized by one Spirit into one body ; whose name is written in heaven ; who is a fruit-bearing branch of the True Vine, a member of that mystical body of which Christ is the head. But the day of death is not better than the day of birth to any who die unregenerate, unjustified, unsaved. The day of death was not better than the day of birth to Nimrod, to Balaam, to Nabal, to Saul, to the rich man who lifted up his eyes in torment, to Judas Iscariot, to Simon Magus, to Herod, whom the angel of the Lord smote, because he gave not God the glory, nor to the wicked members of the Jewish Sanhedrim, who suborned false witnesses, and nefariously accomplished the crucifixion of Jesus. That the day of death is better than the day of birth is not an universal proposition, but is restricted and limited by the preceding hemistich, is self-evident. The day of death is not better than the day of birth to 'the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, nor to murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, liars.' 'There shall in nowise enter into the new heaven and new earth anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie ; but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life.' God is holy, heaven is holy ; no one unholy shall enter there.

For the literal meaning of the Hebrew word rendered PERFUME, see note on x. 5.

#### VERSES 2, 3, AND 4.

Solomon, in the third chapter of this book, writes :—

‘There is a time for every purpose under the sun ;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh :

A time to mourn, and a time to dance :

A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.’

This statement proves that Solomon's object in this chapter was not to condemn ALL feasting, ALL laughter, and ALL merriment; but to teach that death, and mourning, and sorrow, are mercies in disguise, afflictions graciously sent by God to humble our souls in the dust, to bring our past sins to remembrance, to wean us from earthly vanities, to prepare us for death and judgment, to remind us that this is not our rest. Blessed are they who by sanctified affliction are elevated above the things of time and sense, and have their hopes and affections there fixed, where true joys are to be found. Christ imparted joy and felicity to the marriage-feast in Cana, and wept at the grave of Lazarus. 'There is a time to weep, and a time to laugh.'

## VERSE 7.

Cranmer's Bible, 1549, and the Bishops' Bible, 1595, translate this verse—

'The wise man hateth wrong dealing;  
And abhorreth the heart that coveteth rewardes.'

## VERSE 8.

The Hebrew word, here rendered LAWSUIT, has this signification.—*Exodus* xviii. 16, 22; xxii. 8 (9); xxiv. 14.

## VERSE 10.

Do not under-estimate present mercies. Do not derogate from nor lightly esteem God's providential administration of the universe. Attempt not to unravel the hidden mysteries of Providence.

## VERSE 11.

To them who see the sun; that is, to all men.

## XII.

## CHAPTER VII.—VERSES 15-26.

THE brevity of the lives of saints, the prolonged existence of sinners, and the manifold vicissitudes of human life, result from, and ought ever to be ascribed to, the sovereign will of the omnipotent and all-wise Administrator of the universe, supervising and controlling the volitions and passions of puny man. Separation from the ways and maxims of the ungodly, and assiduous pursuit of divinely-enjoined righteousness and wisdom, constitute man's commanded duty and true happiness.

Consciousness of our own defective obedience should teach us not to expect perfection in man, and to be lenient to the frailties of others.

The fall of man is a profound mystery which none can fathom. Its sinful manifestations, co-extensive with the human race, culminate in and through female depravity.



- 15 Born these cases have I seen in the days of my vanity :  
There is a righteous man who dieth through his righteousness,  
And there is a wicked man who prolongeth his life through his  
iniquity (saying),
- 16 ‘ Be not righteous overmuch,  
Neither make thyself overwise ;  
Why shouldst thou destroy thyself ?’
- 17 Be not overmuch wicked,  
Neither be thou foolish ;  
Why shouldst thou die eternally ?
- 18 As it is good that thou shouldst retain hold of this, .  
So, also from that withdraw not thine hand :  
For he who feareth God shall come forth with them both.
- 19 This (maxim of) wisdom will be confirmed to a wise man,  
By any ten rulers who have been in a city,
- 20 That there is not upon earth a righteous man,  
Who doeth good and never sinneth.
- 21 Therefore give not heed to all words which are spoken ;  
Lest thou overhear thy servant revile thee :
- 22 For oftentimes also thine own heart is conscious  
That thou thyself likewise hast reviled others.
- 23 All this (matter) have I tested by wisdom :  
I resolved I would be wise ;
- 24 But it (wisdom) was remote from me.  
That which hath been is remote and mysterious ;  
Mysterious, who can find it out ?
- 25 I revolved again in my heart  
That I would ascertain, and investigate, and seek out wisdom and  
knowledge ;  
And that I would seek out the wickedness of folly and the foolish-  
ness of madness :
- 26 Then I find more bitter than death the woman  
Whose heart is snares and nets,  
And whose hands are fetters :  
He who is good in God’s sight shall be delivered from her ;  
But the sinner shall be entrapped by her.

## VERSE 15.

The frequent prosperity of the wicked, and adversity of the righteous, is a topic which, in every age, has exercised the faith of God's children, and caused the infidel and sceptic to deny Jehovah's providential administration of the universe. The prominence given by the wise king of Israel to this incontrovertible fact seems to be designed to elevate the soul of the reader above the vanities of time and sense, to the contemplation of the glories and realities of eternity. Solomon in this didactic poem teaches by implication as well as by direct assertion. This verse inferentially inculcates the immortality of the souls of all men, and a final universal judgment and retribution of the whole posterity of Adam, when the supreme Judge will compensate the inequalities of time, and will vindicate the ways of God with man.

## VERSES 16 AND 17.

Two reasons may be assigned, which demonstratively prove, that Solomon could never have admonished others 'not to be righteous overmuch, and not to be overwise:'—

1. To be righteous overmuch is impracticable and impossible, a perfection never attained by any child of Adam since the fall. In many things we offend all. In our flesh dwelleth no good thing. Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. If God were to enter into judgment with us, we could not answer him a word. Man's unrighteousness needeth to be robed in the righteousness of Messiah, that he may be justified before God. Perfection of righteousness is impossible without perfection of sanctification and perfection of glory.

To be overwise, as respects the wisdom which is above, is equally an impossibility. Man's wisdom is not innate, but the gift of God. Obscuration of understanding is common to all the human race. We now see through a glass darkly, more especially in matters pertaining to God. Perfection of heavenly wisdom can never be obtained until we see face to face. Superfluity of righteousness, as well as superfluity of heavenly wisdom, is an imaginary phantom, an *ignis fatuus*, a *mirage*, a nonentity, which never has existed, and never can exist.

2. To counsel men 'not to be righteous overmuch, and not to be overwise,' is antagonistic to the former teaching of Solomon in the Book of Proverbs, and to other portions of God's revealed will. 'Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it' (*Proverbs* viii. 11). 'The price of wisdom is above rubies, the topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold' (*Job* xxviii. 18, 19; see also *Proverbs* iv., vii., and xxiii. 23). 'In the way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof there is no death' (*Proverbs* xii. 28). See *Proverbs* viii., x., and xi.

This worldly maxim is the counsel of the wicked man, not the maxim or teaching of Solomon. The meaning of the passage is clear and perspicuous by the insertion of the word SAYING. This word is inserted by our translators in *Ecclesiastes* iv. 8; *Psalms* ii. 2; xxii. 7, etc. etc., as essential to the sense, though not expressed in the Hebrew. The authority of our translators, manifested in these three passages, and the *exigentia loci*, fully warrant the insertion of the word SAYING at the end of verse 15.

The very parallelism of the Hebrew seems to imply that verse 17 is a counter-maxim to verse 16; that if verse 17 be the inspired maxim inculcated by Solomon, then verse 16 must be the maxim of the wicked man, who prolongeth his life through his iniquity.

## VERSE 17.

'Be not overmuch wicked,' that is, do not add to original or birth-sin actual transgressions, rejection of God, and contempt of His word and will.

## VERSE 18.

Retain hold of righteousness, and from wisdom withdraw not thy hand, for he who

feareth God shall come forth and enter into life, possessing both righteousness and wisdom, which shall regulate his conduct throughout his earthly pilgrimage.

## VERSE 26.

‘To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words, which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God, for her house inclineth unto death, and her paths to the dead’ (*Proverbs* ii. 16-18). ‘The lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on hell’ (*Proverbs* v. 3-6). Read the graphic portraiture of chapter vii., concluding with the words: ‘She hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her: her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death;’ and read chapter ix. 14-18, ‘The foolish woman sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high-places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their way. Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him: Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell.’ He who would thoroughly imbibe this teaching of Solomon, and would understand by what name the place of the damned was expressed in the Old Testament before the captivity of Babylon, whilst the first Temple was standing, should read the discourse of Joseph Mede on *Proverbs* xxi. 16. Mede thus applies his text: ‘He that goeth astray from the way of understanding, *i.e.*, from the law and discipline of God, must one day go to his fellow-giants, who were destroyed, because they had no wisdom, and perished through their own foolishness.’

These warnings of Solomon in the Book of *Proverbs* and in this verse indisputably prove, that the licentiousness of Jerusalem in the days of Solomon was what the licentiousness of London now is. Jerusalem had her unfortunates as London now has. The streets and thoroughfares of Jerusalem were traversed by moral pests, as the *paré* of London now is. The warnings of Solomon are addressed to all times, all places, and all classes, to the seducer and to the seduced, to Jew and Gentile, to high and low, rich and poor, one with another.

In regard to this criminality, a distinctive difference exists between the days of Solomon and our own times. Systematic efforts are now made to reclaim the fallen, to communicate to them the gospel, to rescue their bodies from premature decay, and their souls from eternal perdition. Such efforts to evangelize were not made in the days of Solomon, and evince that, in this respect, former times were not better than our own,—that this age enjoys privileges unknown in the days of David and Solomon.

The good in God’s sight are identical with the regenerate, the justified, the sanctified.

## XIII.

## CHAPTER VII. VERSE 27 TO CHAPTER VIII. VERSE 1.

SOLOMON’S discovery, after long and continuous pursuit, of the predicted Messiah, perfect Man as well as perfect God, ‘The chiefest among ten thousand,’ the Angel, the Intercessor, One above a thousand, who manifesteth unto man His righteousness, and saith: ‘I have found a ransom.’



Solomon's discovery, that the burnt-offerings and other sacrifices ordained by the Mosaic ritual were only shadows of good things to come, symbolic representations of the perfect sacrifice of the promised Redeemer, and that they could not in themselves put away sin, or make satisfaction for man's transgression.

God created man holy and happy. From man's fall and apostasy have germinated all the false religions of the world, the devices of Satan to destroy immortal souls.

- 27 BEHOLD, this have I found, saith Khoheleth,  
 (Adding) one fact to another to find out the conclusion,  
 28 Which my soul had hitherto sought, but which I had not found.  
 A Man, One above a thousand, I have found,  
 But an offering made by fire for every curse I have not found.  
 29 Besides, lo ! this have I found,  
 That God hath made man upright,  
 But they themselves have sought out many devices.

#### VIII.

- 1 Who resembles the wise man ? and who understands the interpretation of the oracle ?  
 The wisdom of that man will enlighten his countenance,  
 And the confidence of his countenance will be doubled.

#### VERSE 27.

Khoheleth, that is, THE REPENTANT INVALID (see note on i. 1, 2, also Preface, and Critical Appendix).

#### VERSE 28.

The difficulties of the authorized version of this passage have been generally felt and acknowledged. The authorized version represents that among one thousand Solomon found one man but not one woman. If the supposed ellipsis be supplied, an ellipsis unexampled and without precedent, the statement will be, that among one thousand Solomon found one righteous man, and not one righteous woman. From this statement several questions naturally result. Of whom did the thousand consist ? Of men exclusively ? Of women exclusively ? Or was it a miscellaneous assemblage of men and women ? Of women exclusively it could not consist, because Solomon found a man among them. Of men exclusively it could not consist, or Solomon would not have sought for a woman among them. Nor can the thousand have any reference to Solomon's seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, because, as an able critic has well remarked, among these occupants of his harem Solomon would never have sought for, and could never have found, a man. Furthermore, disguise it as we may, from this version, results the corollary, that Solomon found more pure religion in the male than in the female sex, a position contradictory to all and every Christian experience. Had our translators any inkling of a Messianic interpretation by the marginal reference to Job xxxiii. 23, wherein Elihu affirms a Mediator, an Intercessor 'to deliver man from going down to the pit (of destruction), and to find a ransom and an atonement' (for him), wherein Elihu describes the Mediator in the self-same words which Solomon has here repeated, 'AS ONE



AMONG (ABOVE) A THOUSAND?—Or has this marginal reference been added subsequently to the first edition (1611) of our authorized English version?

ONE ABOVE A THOUSAND I consider a title of Christ Jesus, predicated of Him by Job in chap. xxxiii. 23, and by Solomon in this verse. Both passages are parallel to Canticles v. 10: 'MY BELOVED IS THE CHIEFEST AMONG TEN THOUSAND.'

AN OFFERING MADE BY FIRE is a generic term for every offering and oblation. Hence the affirmation of Solomon, that sin cannot be remitted, nor God propitiated, by the mere oblation of sacrifice.

EVERY CURSE is every denunciation of Divine wrath against every transgression of man.

Hence the meaning of the version I have submitted will be: Solomon, having sinned against light and knowledge, and having by idolatry apostatized from God, earnestly sought for some method of reconciliation to God,—some way of salvation. Ultimately, by faith he obtained an experimental knowledge of the predicted Messiah, the man Christ Jesus, mighty to save, and experimentally discovered that all the Mosaic sacrifices were shadows, not realities,—symbolic representations to the spiritual Israel of the only name under heaven whereby man can be saved.

#### VERSE 29.

'God, the author of nature, not of sin, created man upright. But man, self-depraved and justly condemned, begat a depraved and condemned posterity. We were all in Adam, when he, the father of the human race, corrupted all, having lapsed into sin through the woman, who was created out of Adam before sin was in the world.'—*Augustine*.

#### CHAPTER VIII. VERSE I.

The hemistichs (chap. viii. 1) which conclude this section of the didactic poem intimate the existence in this paragraph of some deep mystery, which spiritual wisdom alone can unravel, the knowledge of which imparts confidence, joy, and peace in believing. This mystery is the incarnate Son of God, the end of all revelation, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel. Solomon beheld the gospel in its germ, we are privileged to live under its fully expanded flower.

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### XIV.

#### CHAPTER VIII.—VERSES 2-8.

SOLOMON, after his restoration from that apostasy into which he had fallen, by example and precept commands obedience to King Messiah, 'the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star,' and enjoins to all men prompt, passive, and willing submission to all Messiah's commands,—man's highest wisdom and true interest. Solomon further admonisheth not to rest in the means of grace, but to seek the presence of Messiah therein by the manifestation of the Spirit.

Messiah, Lord of life and death, Head and King of the Church militant and of the Church triumphant, translates from the conflicts of times to the glories of

immortality each believer, when he has fulfilled the mission for which he was sent into the world, each grain of wheat when it has been divested of chaff and is fit for the garner, that all the saints, now one in Christ in grace and time, may be one in Christ in glory and eternity, to whom on the day of judgment he will say : ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.’

- 2 I MYSELF keep the King’s commandment ;  
Yea (keep it), in regard of the oath of God.
- 3 Withdraw not hastily from His presence,  
Persist not in a wrong matter,  
For He doeth whatsoever pleaseth Him.
- 4 Where the edict of the King is, there is power,  
And who can say to Him, What doest Thou ?
- 5 Whoso keepeth the commandment shall experience no evil.

Moreover, the heart of the wise man expecteth the time of judgment,

- 6 For there is a time of judgment for every matter,  
Because the wickedness of man is great upon him.
- 7 Verily, no man knoweth what shall come to pass,  
For what shall come to pass, who can tell him ?
- 8 No man hath control over the spirit to retain the spirit,  
And no man hath control over the day of death,  
For there is no discharge in this warfare,  
Neither shall wickedness deliver those who commit it.

#### VERSES 2, 3, 4, AND 5.

Critics, commentators, and students of Scripture have all acknowledged the manifest incongruity, that Solomon, the wisest and most absolute of monarchs, should in this section have inculcated loyalty and submission to regal authority in general, without any reference to his own royal dignity and autocracy. The reader of the Hebrew original is startled by the unwonted ellipsis of the words COUNSEL TREE, introduced, contrary to Oriental idiom and all propriety of language, into the English version, of which words neither trace nor intimation exists in the Hebrew. The line : ‘Whoso keepeth the commandment shall experience no evil,’ interpreted as promising exemption from evil to him who obeyeth the mandate of an earthly sovereign, is a *crux interpretum*, which admits of no solution. Nor is there any connexion between obedience to kings and universality of death. But the reference of this section of the didactic poem to King Messiah solves every difficulty, and evidences the reality of the connexion. Even the Chaldee Targum, the production of a Christ-denying Rabbi, declares KING MESSIAH to be the sum and substance of these verses. He writes : ‘In the

time of the anger of the Lord, cease not to pray before Him : hasten into His presence : go and pray, and seek mercy from Him, that thou persist not in any evil, for JEHOVAH THE LORD OF ALL WORLDS will do whatsoever He pleaseth. When the edict of THE KING WHO RULES THE WHOLE WORLD is decreed, it is speedily executed.' Jerome thus interprets the passage : ' I consider Solomon now to speak of the KING, of whom David says : "The KING shall joy in thy strength, O Lord" (*Psalms* xxi. 1). And in another passage, which signifies the one kingdom of the Father and of the Son, the Scripture saith : "Give THE KING Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto THE KING'S SON." "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." This KING, the Son of God, is the Son of the Father, who is KING.'

But the question recurs, Would the word KING convey to the Jewish reader of the Book called Ecclesiastes, in the time of Solomon, the idea of KING MESSIAH? We reply, that the Psalms of David were sung in the Temple erected by Solomon, and that in many of the Psalms the word KING indisputably signifies KING MESSIAH :—

## PSALM II. 6.

'Yet have I set MY KING upon my holy hill of Zion.'

## PSALM XLV.

Celebrates the mystical union between Christ and His Church. THE KING of this Psalm is KING MESSIAH.

## PSALM XLVII. 6 AND 7.

'Sing praises unto our KING, sing praises, for God is the KING OF ALL THE EARTH.'

## PSALM LXXII.

The KING of this Psalm is KING MESSIAH : Verse 11, 'All kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him ;' Verse 19, 'Let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen.'

## PSALM LXXXIX. 18.

'The Lord is our defence, and the Holy One of Israel is our KING.'

## PSALM XCVIII. 6 AND 9.

'Make a joyful noise before the Lord the KING, for He cometh to judge the earth.'

## PSALM CXLIX. 2.

'Let the children of Zion be joyful in their KING.'

*In regard to the oath of God :* 'The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.' MESSIAH is our Prophet, Priest, and King.

## VERSE 8.

The day of the death of every individual is appointed from all eternity by KING MESSIAH, the Son of God and Son of Man, the Lord of the spirits of all men, the sovereign arbiter of human affairs, who openeth and no man shutteth, who shutteth, and no man openeth, and who commandeth all the children of Adam, Jew and Gentile, 'Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.'

## XV.

## CHAPTER VIII. VERSE 9 TO CHAPTER IX. VERSE 12.

THE temporal prosperity of the wicked, the frequent oblivion of the righteous, the maladministration of human affairs, and the equality of destiny which alike befalls the whole human race, all demonstratively prove a future state of rewards and punishments, a sempiternity of misery to all Christless sinners, and a sempiternity of glory to all the regenerate, the justified, the sanctified—

‘Where the wicked cease from troubling,  
Where the weary are at rest.’

All our blessings flow through Christ from the Father of mercies and God of all consolation, undeserved and unmerited by any. These should elicit adoration of the good and gracious Giver, and self-dedication of ourselves and talents unto Him, whose we are, and whom we are obligated to serve with every faculty of our mind, and with every member of our body.

- 9 ALL this have I contemplated,  
And have applied my heart to every work  
Which has been done under the sun,  
Even when one man ruleth over another man to his own hurt.
- 10 Yea, truly, I have seen the wicked buried,  
And that they have gone in and out of the holy place,  
Whilst they who have acted right have been forgotten in the city ;  
This also is vanity.
- 11 Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed,  
Therefore the heart of the children of Adam is fully set in them to  
do evil.
- 12 Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and (God) is long-suffer-  
ing to him,  
Yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God,  
Because they fear before him.
- 13 But it shall not be well with the wicked man, nor will (God) be  
long-suffering ;  
His days are as a shadow, because he feareth not before God.
- 14 There is a vanity which is acted upon the earth,  
That there are righteous men to whom it happens  
As if they had done the work of the ungodly,  
And there are ungodly men to whom it happens



As if they had done the work of the righteous ;  
I considered that this also is vanity.

- 15 Then I commended enjoyment,  
Because there is no happiness under the sun to man,  
But to eat and to drink and to be joyful,  
And that this should continue with him in his labour during the  
days of his life  
Which God hath given him under the sun.

- 16 When I applied my mind to learn wisdom,  
And to contemplate the toil which has been undergone upon the  
earth,  
For that by day and by night man enjoyeth no sleep with his  
eyes,  
17 Then I contemplated all the work of God,  
That no man can discover the work  
Which has been done under the sun,  
Because though a man may labour to find it out, yet he shall not  
discover it,  
Yea, though a wise man think that he knows it,  
Yet he will not be able to discover it.

IX.

- 1 For all this I have laid to heart, even to investigate all this,  
That the righteous, and the wise, and their works are in the hand  
of God ;  
Also love and hatred.  
No man can at all discern that which is before him :  
2 All things come alike to all ;  
There is one destiny to the righteous and to the wicked,  
To the good and to the evil, to the pure and the impure,  
To him who sacrifices and to him who doth not sacrifice ;  
As is the good man, so is the sinner,  
And the swearer as he who feareth an oath.  
3 This evil exists in everything which has been done under the sun,  
That there is one destiny to all,  
Yea, also the heart of the children of Adam is full of evil,  
And madness is in their heart while they live, and after they go to  
the dead.

- 4 Verily for him who is joined to all the living there is hope ;  
Because a living dog is better than a dead lion.
- 5 For the living know that they must die,  
But the dead are cognizant of nothing ;  
And moreover to them there is no further reward :  
Truly their memory is forgotten.
- 6 Also their love, and their hatred, and their jealousy, have long ago  
perished,  
Neither have they participation any more for ever  
In all that is done under the sun.
- 7 Go, eat thy bread with gladness,  
And drink thy wine with a cheerful heart ;  
For God has long since graciously accepted thy works.
- 8 Let thy garments be at all times white,  
And let thy head not lack perfume.
- 9 Enjoy life with thy wife whom thou lovest,  
All the days of thy transitory life which He hath given to thee  
under the sun :  
For this is thy portion in life,  
And in thy labour wherein thou labourest under the sun.
- 10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ;  
For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom,  
In the abode of the dead, whither thou art going.
- 11 I have often observed under the sun,  
That the race is not always won by the swift,  
Nor the battle by the strong,  
Nor yet sustenance by the wise,  
Nor yet wealth by men of understanding,  
Nor yet favour by men of skill ;  
But that doom and destiny happen to them all :
- 12 For that no man knoweth his doom.  
As fishes that are taken in a lethal net,  
Or as birds that are caught in a snare,  
So, like unto them are the children of Adam ensnared in a lethal  
time,  
When it falleth suddenly upon them.

## CHAPTER VIII. VERSE 9.

‘What hurt men do to others will return in the end to their own hurt.’—*Henry.*

## VERSE 11.

The following anecdote exemplifies this apophthegm of Solomon, and teaches that if criminality be not promptly visited with condign punishment, the heart will become so hardened, and the conscience so seared, as frequently not to discriminate good from evil. The captain of a Bristol slave-ship was coasting the shores of Africa for traffic. On landing, a slave-dealer offered him for sale two female slaves, each having an infant in her arms. The captain refused to buy. The slave-dealer with surprise inquired why he landed if he would not purchase. The captain objected to the children. The slave-dealer asked if he would buy the mothers without the children. The captain consented, and the price was settled. The slave-dealer then dashed out the brains of the two little innocents against a neighbouring tree, and the captain embarked the weeping bereaved mothers. The captain himself told this tale with perfect *sang froid* at a dinner-party in Bristol, and remarked that the slave-dealer seemed unconscious that he had committed any crime. My informant, one of the guests, said to the captain—‘Are you not aware, that you yourself are a *particeps criminis*, for if you had not consented to buy, the two innocents would not have been murdered?’ My informant was a most eminent solicitor in the city of Bristol, universally respected for his strict probity, sterling integrity, and unimpeachable veracity, and was the professional adviser of my family for nearly half a century.

## VERSES 12 AND 13.

‘If God love a righteous man, as certainly He does, he is happy though the world frown upon him; and if He hate a wicked man, as certainly He does, he is miserable though the world smile upon him.’—*Henry.*

## VERSE 15.

Solomon qualifies his statement, that there is no happiness to man but to eat and to drink and to be joyful, by the words UNDER THE SUN; as much as if he had said, that these constitute man’s EARTHLY happiness, man’s physical corporeal good, not the good of his soul, which is peace with God, resulting from an assurance of an individual interest in Christ’s salvation. Solomon’s object in this and similar passages is to recommend cheerfulness of disposition, contentment of mind, and avoidance of excessive anxiety and carefulness, casting all care upon Him who hath loved His people with an everlasting love, and who delighteth to do them good according to His eternal covenant on their behalf, in all things ordered and sure.

## VERSES 16 AND 17.

The contemplation of Solomon embraced both the multifarious labours of man and God’s providential administration of the universe. This contemplation was not superficial, but protracted and erudite, yet failed in both particulars. If man cannot fully comprehend the works of his fellow-men, much less can his intellect grasp the deep mysteries of Divine providence, only partially discerned in time, and in their fulness inscrutable until we attain perfection of knowledge and glory.

## CHAPTER IX. VERSE 1.

The love and hatred of our fellow-men towards us are regulated by the intervention of Divine providence. No man can foresee his futurity, that which hereafter shall befall him

in his pilgrimage here below; but all things, even man's love and hatred, are foreknown to God, and by Him are regulated with infinite wisdom according to the counsel of His own will.

## VERSE 3.

As death leaves man so eternity will find him. There is no change of heart after death. He who dies in a state of unregeneracy will remain unregenerate through the countless ages of eternity. He who dies a Christless sinner will remain a Christless sinner for ever and ever. As God has loved His people with an everlasting love, shedding His abiding love in their hearts, that in life and after death they may love Him who first loved them, so hatred to Christ, His people, and His gospel, survives the grave, and abides in Christless sinners permanent and inextinguishable throughout eternity. The madness, which instigated rejection of Christ in time, will endure when time shall be no more, as immortal as the never-dying soul itself.

## VERSE 4.

This aphorism, an ancient proverb current in the language and peninsula of Arabia, inferentially teaches that life is the seed-time for eternity, that unless salvation shall be obtained during life, it can never be realized after death. May we not also deduce therefrom, that they who have been quickened from death in sin to life in righteousness by the regeneration of the Spirit, whatever may be their state or condition, are more precious in the Divine estimation than those who abide in nature's darkness, however honoured in their day and generation, or whatever benefits they may have conferred on their families, their country, or the world? Did Solomon select this aphorism from the proverbs of Arabia, or did the Arabians borrow it from the book of Ecclesiastes? The Arabic prefix *h* seems to indicate that it had its origin in Arabia.

## VERSE 5.

By the declaration, that 'the dead have no further reward,' Solomon teaches, that God will render to every man according to the deeds DONE IN THE BODY. Death is alike the termination of man's probation and of man's labour in God's vineyard. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave (the 'abode of the dead), whither thou goest' (*Ecclesiastes* ix. 10).

## VERSES 5 AND 6.

The dead are not cognizant of, nor have any participation in, mundane affairs:—

'By death transported to th' eternal shore,  
Souls so removed revisit us no more.'

They who sleep in Jesus are indeed in rest, joy, and felicity, and repose with Abraham in the Paradise of God. But they return not again to this world, until, rising in Christ's likeness, they shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom, and shall reign with Christ ON EARTH. 'His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them' (*Job* xiv. 21). 'Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us' (*Isaiah* lxiii. 16).

Calvin, in his *Institutes* (iii. 20, 24), thus writes: 'When the Lord withdrew the dead from our society, He left to us no mean of intercourse with them; nor, as far as we can possibly conjecture, has He left to them any mean of intercourse with us.' See page 520 of the original French edition, published at Geneva in 1564, the very year the great Reformer died.



‘What fruit of earthly toils when from life’s stage  
 Withdrawn? Are they not strangers then to all  
 That passeth here, their very names forgot  
 By the survivors? Nor imports it whom  
 They loved or hated, since none court their smiles  
 Or dread their frowns; this busy world to them,  
 They to its joys and griefs, for ever lost.’—*Khoheleth*.

Scripture in this and other passages authoritatively denies the return of the dead to the earth, and consequently their re-appearance to the living; but Scripture nowhere denies the reality of admonitory and premonitory dreams and apparitions. Indeed, God foretells the seeing of visions and dreaming of dreams by the saints to be one sign of the near approach of the Second Advent. That dreams and spectral apparitions divinely sent do occur is evident from the dream or apparition seen by the Rev. Samuel Medlicott. The Rev. Dr. Sirr stated this dream to me orally, and has inserted it in the very words of Rev. S. Medlicott in his life of the last Archbishop of Tuam, pages 762, 763: ‘I was at my brother’s in Wiltshire, whither I made my first move in search of health, early in March last year (1839). There, at a very early hour one morning (I think four o’clock), the dear Archbishop (I shall never forget his sweet face, though pale as death, and head uncovered) stood at the foot of my bed and said, “I am tired of, and I will, or I have left Tuam; and I will never return there.” This greatly disturbed, and of course roused me. I thought I had, as it were, seen a vision; and mentioned what I do here to Mrs. Medlicott as she awoke. But how was I indeed disturbed, how painfully cast down, when in due time the heartrending tidings reached me, that ON THAT VERY DAY AND AT THAT VERY HOUR HIS GRACE HAD DEPARTED THIS LIFE!’ The occurrence of Divine dreams and apparitions is also evident from the dream of Dr. Milner before he was made Dean of Carlisle, narrated by his niece; from the dream or vision whereby Colonel Gardiner was converted, recorded by Dr. Doddridge; and more particularly from the prophetic dream of Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, reported by D’Aubigné, in the very words of Spalatin, in his History of the Reformation.<sup>1</sup> This dream, foreshadowing in visions of the night the world-wide influence of Luther’s writings, the ire of the Popedom, and the spread of the Reformation, was thrice vouchsafed to the Elector on the night preceding 31st October 1517. Early in the morning of this day, the Elector related this dream to his brother and co-Regent, Duke John, and to his Chancellor; and on this very day Luther affixed his theses to the door of the church of Wittenberg, the first act and commencement of the glorious Reformation. We shall never know till the revelation of the last day how much this dream secretly influenced the Elector to protect the monk, whose iron pen, reaching from Wittenberg to Rome,

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<sup>1</sup> ‘I dreamt that the Almighty sent me a monk, who was a true son of Paul the apostle. He was accompanied by all the saints, in obedience to God’s command, to bear him testimony, and to assure me that he did not come with any fraudulent design, but that all he should do was conformable to the will of God. They asked my gracious permission to let him write something on the doors of the Palace Chapel at Wittenberg, which I conceded through my Chancellor. Upon this the monk repaired thither and began to write; so large were the characters that I could read from Schweinitz what he was writing. The pen he used was so long that its extremity reached as far as Rome, where it pierced the ears of a lion which lay there, and shook the triple crown on the Pope’s head. All the cardinals and princes ran up hastily and endeavoured to support it; you and I both tendered our assistance. I stretched out my arm; that moment I awoke with my arm extended, in great alarm, and very angry with this monk who could not guide his pen better. I recovered myself a little. . . . It was only a dream.

‘I was still half asleep, and once more closed my eyes. The dream came again. The lion, still disturbed

caused the Papal Lion (Leo. X.) to roar; nor how much this dream contributed to the final triumph of Reformation light over Papal darkness.

These four, to which others might easily have been added, are indubitable facts. They are amply sufficient to verify the sparse occurrence in bygone years of premonitory dreams, which Joel foretells will be more frequent before the Second Advent. Other authenticated dreams, some within my own knowledge, might have been adduced. Of these I feel obligated to subjoin three, which, I believe, will greatly interest the reader.

On Sunday, 14th January 1838, my father communicated to Mrs. Coleman, to whose memory this volume is dedicated, a dream he had on the preceding night, in which three texts were impressed on his mind: 1st, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved;' 2d, 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life;' 3d, 'It is finished.' My father considered this dream a premonition of his approaching dissolution, and gave me the names and addresses of four friends to whom I was to communicate his death as soon as it should occur. On Monday, 22d January, a physician, a particular friend, came from Ryde to Ventnor to spend the day with us: he examined my father, considered he was suffering from a slight cold, and pronounced that he would soon be well. My father expressed to him an opposite opinion. On leaving the house the physician said to me, 'Don't be alarmed, your father will soon recover.' Early in the morning of Thursday, 25th January, my father said to the maid-servant who sat up with him, 'What sweet sleep I have had!' He turned in his bed. After a short interval, the servant, not hearing him breathe as she had previously done, rushed into our room. Before Mrs. Coleman and myself could step from one bedchamber to the other the vital spark was extinct, and my father was a corpse. He died in his sleep at half-past two o'clock on that morning.

Mrs. Coleman herself had a very singular dream some time before our marriage. She dreamt that she attended a chapel, the minister of which gave out as his text Psalm lxviii. 1, 'Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered,' and that in the course of his sermon he remarked that the text was mistranslated, and ought to have been rendered: 'God shall arise. His enemies shall be scattered.' She mentioned this dream at the breakfast-table on Sunday morning. A lady present exclaimed: 'I am so struck with your dream, that I must accompany you.' They went together to the chapel. The minister gave out his text, Psalm lxviii. 1, and stated in his sermon that the Hebrew was in the future tense, and that the true interpretation was: 'God shall arise. His enemies shall be scattered.' The lady remarked—'You have had some private intercourse with the minister.' 'No,' replied Mrs. C., 'he is a perfect stranger to me. I have never had any intercourse with him, written or oral.' On Psalm lxviii. Mrs. C. in her Bible wrote this marginal note: 'This Psalm refers to Christ Jesus, MY ONLY Saviour.' And her prayer, written in the same Bible, concludes with these words: 'May I look unto Jesus for pardon, and receive it, for heaven, and enjoy it, so that

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by the pen, began to roar with all his might, until the whole city of Rome and all the States of the Holy Empire ran up to know what was the matter. The Pope called upon us to oppose this monk, and addressed himself particularly to me, because the friar was living in my dominions. I again awoke, repeated the Lord's Prayer, entreated God to preserve his Holiness, and fell asleep.

'I then dreamt that all the princes of the Empire, and we along with them, hastened to Rome and endeavoured one after another to break this pen; but the greater our exertions, the stronger it became; it crackled as if it had been made of iron; we gave it up as hopeless. I then asked the monk (for I was now at Rome, now at Wittenberg) where he had got that pen and how it had come to be so strong. "This pen," replied he, "belonged to a Bohemian goose a hundred years old. I had it from one of my old schoolmasters. It is so strong because no one can take the pith out of it; and I am myself quite astonished at it." On a sudden I heard a loud cry. From the monk's long pen had issued a host of other pens. I awoke a third time. It was daylight.'—D'Aubigné's *History of the Reformation*, Book iii. Chapter 4.

my compassionate Saviour may be truly precious to my soul, constraining me to thank Thee. O Lord, for thy written word, as a true light, and a sure guide in the path of peace. My God, my God, hear the cry of my heart, answer the desire of my soul, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen and Amen.'

The following dream is remarkable, as it foreshadowed the lamentable riots and incendiary fires, which occurred in Bristol in the year 1831, and began in Queen's Square. A gentleman resided in that square, with whom, and with his family, I had some intercourse in the Isle of Wight. One morning this gentleman, whilst breakfasting with his family, said: 'I HAVE HAD A REMARKABLE DREAM, THAT QUEEN'S SQUARE WAS IN FLAMES, AND THAT THE MIDDLE OF THE SQUARE WAS FILLED WITH SOLDIERS.' After leaving the breakfast-table he again referred to his dream, when his wife said, 'I hope WE shall not suffer?' He replied, 'YOU WILL ALL BE PRESERVED, BUT I SHALL BE SAFE LANDED.' Shortly after, he was walking with a relative of mine, and proposed going over Prince's Street Bridge, along the New Cut, towards Clifton. She declined to go farther, observing, 'What a VERY DARK cloud!—rain must be coming.' He was silent a few minutes, whilst they stood observing this cloud, and then said, in answer to her remark: 'THERE IS A MUCH DARKER CLOUD!—SOME VERY HEAVY CALAMITY HANGING OVER BRISTOL!' The dream which he had seen in the visions of the night was literally fulfilled. He died SUDDENLY, six weeks before the riots commenced. His widow, as a measure of precaution, was removed from the house. But she and all the family were preserved, and his house was exempted from that conflagration, which consumed the new prison, the two toll-houses, the bridewell, and Lawford's Gate prisons, the bishop's palace, the mansion-house, the Custom-house, the Excise Office, and nearly fifty dwellings and warehouses in Queen's Square and streets adjacent, and destroyed property to the amount of £100,000. This gentleman was remarkable for reticence and habitual reserve. In conversation his language on all occasions was deliberate and concise. My relative communicated to me in writing these identical words spoken by him at his own breakfast-table and during their walk.

I would also refer the reader to 'The Voice in the Dream; a Tale of Age,' originally written by my deceased friend, Rev. John East, Incumbent of St. Michael's, Bath, wherein is narrated a dream or spectral vision vouchsafed on three successive nights to a dying votary of pleasure, which dream was instrumental of her conversion, and premonitory of the blessing of Mr. East's ministry to her soul. 'The Scripture claims the dream as a medium through which God may speak to man. The Scripture declares, not as any strange thing, but as a thing of course, that the influence of the Spirit of God upon the soul extends to its sleeping as well as its waking thoughts.'—Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*.

' Truly God speaketh once,  
Yea, twice to him who regardeth it not,  
In a dream, the vision of the night,  
When deep sleep falleth upon men,  
In slumberings upon the bed:  
Then He openeth the ears of men  
And sealeth their instruction.'—*Job xxxiii. 14-16.*

#### VERSES 7, 8, AND 9.

This admonition is not addressed to the unregenerate, the Christless, or the worldling, but exclusively to God's children. It is God's voice of love to all who possess saving faith in Christ, mercifully to warn them against excessive anxiety concerning the things of time



and sense. It is an incentive to them to use the world, not abusing it. It is a promise to them of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come.

‘Go then, whilst Heav’n permits, and taste the sweets  
Of life: vex not thy soul with anxious cares  
And terrors vain; nor from the world expect  
More than it can afford, or God design’d;  
And if thy works are such as He approves,  
With cheerful heart enjoy what He bestows.’—*K’hoheloth*.

#### VERSE 10.

The Hebrew word, unhappily rendered GRAVE in our version, does not signify the receptacle of the body, but the receptacle of the soul, the under-world, the world of the dead.

‘The Hebrew word (*sheol*) signifies THE PLACE APPOINTED FOR THE HABITATION OF DEPARTED SOULS, IN THE INTERVAL BETWEEN DEATH AND THE GENERAL RESURRECTION. The word describes this place as the object of universal inquiry, the unknown mansion, about which all are anxiously inquisitive. The Sheol of the Old Testament, and Hades of the New, is indeed the Hell to which our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the Apostles’ Creed, descended. It is the paradise to which he conveyed the soul of the repentant thief. It is the place whither His soul went and preached to the souls, not IN PRISON, as we read in our English Bible, but IN SAFE KEEPING, which ONE WHILE HAD BEEN disobedient; but as the expression ONE WHILE HAD BEEN implies, were at length recovered from that disobedience, probably by the preaching of Noah, and before their death had been brought to repentance and faith in the Redeemer to come. To these souls our Lord went in His soul and preached. But what could He preach to them? Not repentance. They had repented of their disobedience before they were separated from the body by death, or they had not been found in the bundle of life. But if He went, and proclaimed to them the glad tidings, that He had actually offered the sacrifice of their redemption, and was now about to enter into glory; this was a preaching that would give new animation and assurance to their hope of the consummation, in due season, of their bliss. And this, by the way, I take to be the true sense of this text of St. Peter.’—Bishop Horsley, *Biblical Criticism*, vol. ii. pp. 329, 330.

#### VERSE 11.

‘Thus the wicked worldlings are deceived, attributing to fortune that which is ordered by the secrete providence of God; for that the reward according to men’s doings is not in this life, but chiefly in the life to come.’—*Bishops’ Bible*.

### XVI.

#### CHAPTER IX. VERSE 13 TO CHAPTER X. VERSE 15.

A PARABOLIC manifestation of Messiah, bruiser of the serpent’s head, Redeemer of the spiritual Israel, during His incarnation despised and rejected of men, now regnant at the right hand of the Majesty on high, whilst Satan, the god of this rebel



world, reigneth in the children of disobedience, who see no beauty in Messiah that they should desire Him.

Christ, incarnate wisdom, clearly predicted in the Book of Proverbs, more obscurely shadowed forth in this book, is the sum and substance of revelation, even of the words of the wise, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Expediency of submission to the powers that be. Perfection not to be expected in rulers, nor in the distribution of their patronage.

There is a retributive justice, which even in this life frequently visits men for their transgressions, and which, in the world to come, will visit those who know not God, nor the gospel of His grace, and will for ever exclude them from the kingdom of His glory, the city not made with hands, whose maker and builder is God.

- 13 This wisdom have I also contemplated under the sun,  
And it has greatly influenced me :  
14 There was a small city, and few men within it,  
And there came a powerful king against it, and besieged it,  
And built great towers against it.  
15 And there was found therein a poor wise man,  
And he by his wisdom saved the city ;  
Yet no one remembered that self-same poor man.  
16 Then thought I that wisdom is better than strength,  
Although the wisdom of that poor man is despised,  
And his words are not obeyed.  
17 The words of wise men obeyed with humility,  
Are better than the shout of one who ruleth over fools.  
18 Better is wisdom than weapons of war.

One sinner destroyeth much good.

- x. 1 Dead flies cause the oil of the perfumer to ferment and become  
fetid,  
(So) doth a little folly him who surpasseth in wisdom and honour.  
2 The heart of a wise man is at his right hand,  
But the heart of a fool is at his left.  
3 Yea, even in the pathway when the fool walketh,  
His wisdom faileth him,  
And he proclaims to every one that he is a fool.  
4 If the spirit of the ruler be roused against thee, abdicate not thy  
office,  
For submission pacifies great offences.

- 5 There is an evil I have observed under the sun,  
Which looked like an oversight which proceeded from the ruler.
- 6 Folly is placed in many high stations,  
And the rich sit in degradation.
- 7 I have seen servants upon horses,  
And princes walking as servants on the ground.
- 8 He who diggeth a pitfall himself shall fall into it,  
And he who breaks down a wall a serpent shall bite him.
- 9 Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith,  
And he who cutteth down trees shall be endangered thereby.
- 10 If the iron instrument be blunt,  
And he has not sharpened the edges,  
Then he must put forth more strength ;  
But superiority of success pertains to skill.
- 11 Surely the serpent which has not been charmed will bite,  
And a babbler is no better (than an uncharmed serpent).
- 12 The words of a wise man's mouth are grace,  
But the lips of the fool destroy himself.
- 13 The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly,  
And the end of his speech is grievous madness.
- 14 Yea, the fool multiplieth words,  
The result of which no man knoweth,  
And what shall be the consequence thereof, who can tell him ?
- 15 The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them,  
Because he hath not understanding to go to the city.

## CHAPTER IX. VERSE 14.

THE SMALL CITY is a symbol of the invisible and spiritual Church, and THE FEW MEN WITHIN IT of the few chosen, the elect of the Father, the redeemed of the Son, and the sanctified of the Holy Ghost, who have entered by the strait gate, and walk in the narrow way.

THE POWERFUL KING is Satan, the prince of the power of the air, who said to Christ concerning the kingdoms of this earth : ' These are mine, and to whomsoever I will I give them.' He is the enemy and accuser of the saints, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour, intent to destroy their consolations, if he cannot destroy their souls. ' They had a KING over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon (destroyer). '—*Apocalypse* ix. 11.

## VERSE 15.

' Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your

sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich' (2 *Corinthians* viii. 9). 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head' (*Matthew* viii. 20). They parted His garments, and cast lots upon His vesture. He was buried in another man's sepulchre. The Hebrew word here rendered POOR occurs only in the Book of Ecclesiastes, and in this book four times, namely, iv. 13, and thrice in this passage.

## VERSES 14, 15, AND 16.

'The Catholic expositors generally affirm that Solomon speaks metaphorically; that by THE CITY we are to understand THE CHURCH, by THE BESIEGING KING THE DEVIL AND HIS FOLLOWERS, by THE POOR WISE MAN CHRIST HIMSELF, who led a life of poverty, and by His wisdom delivered from the power of the devil His people, all who are in Him, and that no one remembers that same poor man, because few are the grateful, many are the ungrateful.'—*Nicholas de Lyra*.

## VERSE 17.

The words WISE MEN are here employed in the same acceptation as in xii. 11, namely, to signify the writers of Scripture, who, by inspired wisdom imparted to them, make others wise unto salvation. The contrast is between Scripture impressed on the heart by the still small voice of the Spirit and the ephemeral blatant vociferation of the sceptic and infidel.

## CHAPTER X. VERSE 1.

Oil impregnated with aromatics. Olive oil was an essential ingredient in the holy anointing oil, described in Exodus xxx. 23-38, wherewith the vessels of the sanctuary, and prophets, priests, and kings were anointed, and is largely used in the perfumes compounded in the East. The Hebrew word here rendered OIL is the same which is translated PERFUME, chapter vii. 1. It is so translated vii. 1, because that verse refers to the fragrance of the perfumed oil. It is here rendered OIL, because x. 1 refers to the substance of the oil effervescing from the admixture of dead flies. 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.'—1 *Corinthians* v. 6, and *Galatians* v. 9.

## VERSE 2.

The wise act with dexterity, fools in their actings resemble left-handed men.

## VERSES 8 AND 9.

The infliction of retributive justice upon nations, families, and individuals for sins committed, is a fact most patent to observation, though too generally unheeded or ignored. I have been conscious of it in my own experience, and have clearly discerned in the lives and vicissitudes of others, that whatever men sow that they shall also reap. The confession of Adoni-bezek is the heartfelt experience of multitudes in every age, and every clime: 'As I have done, so God hath requited me' (*Judges* i. 7). There is no day of judgment for nations, however responsible monarchs and their counsellors may be HEREAFTER for blood shed in unrighteous wars. Whatever injustice men sow to others, they, sooner or later, will generally reap in their own bosoms, or in their posterity. God does now, by secular infliction, visit the sins of fathers upon their children. If God's children transgress, they will be chastised, for a manifestation of His holiness and their sanctification; but His loving-kindness will He not utterly take from them, nor nullify His everlasting covenant, in all things ordered and sure.

How many believers, misguided and infatuated from ignorance or neglect of prophetic truth, advocated Catholic emancipation, whereby England apostatized from her Protestant constitution, and gave political power to Apocalyptic Babylon! That generation sowed the seed, this generation is reaping the harvest. That generation sowed to the wind, this generation is reaping the whirlwind. Two, eminent in rank and prominent in piety, who have long since entered into bliss, SEEM to have been retributively punished in their posterity. The parents voted in Parliament for Rome. Their children are gone to Rome. Nathan said unto David, 'The Lord hath put away thy sin.' Nathan also said, 'The sword shall never depart from thy house.' Of Papal Rome, I would say with Petrarch:—

‘Thou hell on earth! a marvel huge ’twould be,  
If Christ at last pour not His wrath on thee.’

The reader will find ample illustration of God's retributive justice in the celebrated discourse of Joseph Mede on Adoni-bezek's confession of God's retributive punishment upon him. And the remark well merits attention, made by an old inhabitant of Bristol, that the families in that city, which had acquired wealth by the slave-trade, lost that wealth as rapidly and mysteriously as it had been acquired. 'Be sure your sin will find you out.'—*Numbers* xxxii. 23.

#### VERSE 10.

‘Arte helpeth nature.’—*Bishops' Bible*.

#### VERSES 12-15.

The FOOLISH man delineated by Solomon in this paragraph does not signify one deficient in intellect and natural understanding, but one destitute of the saving knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent; one destitute of saving faith, abiding in the same nature's darkness wherein he was born, unregenerate, unjustified, unsanctified, and unsaved, without hope and without God in the world. In this sense, the words FOOL, FOOLISH, FOOLISHNESS, and FOOLISHLY, are to be understood wherever they occur in the Book of Psalms. 'The FOOL has said in his heart, There is no God.' The baneful effect upon the souls of men of vain words and foolish babblings against Divine truth the FOOL knoweth not in time, and none can tell him. But the Day of Judgment will reveal the souls deluded to perdition by his instrumentality, and man on the Day of Judgment will be responsible both for his own disbelief and for every communication of that disbelief to the souls of others.

#### VERSE 15.

The city, 'whose builder and maker is God' (*Hebrews* xi. 10); the city of glory which God hath provided for His saints (*Hebrews* xi. 16); the continuing city, the city to come, which all God's children wish for and earnestly desire (*Hebrews* xiii. 14); the city into which nothing shall enter that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life (*Apocalypse* xxi. 27); the city, 'without which are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and adulterers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie' (*Apocalypse* xxii. 15); the city from which all who are fools, in the Divine estimation, shall for ever be excluded. They who are not members of the kingdom of grace shall never inherit the city and kingdom of glory. The fool knoweth not the way to this city and kingdom of glory, being blinded and led astray by Satanic devices of false religion, by the deceitfulness of his own heart, the fascinations of the world, and the



machinations of the devil. He lives and dies in the same state of nature's darkness in which he was born into the world, and dies unregenerate, unsanctified, unsaved. 'Good were it,' for every such Christless sinner, 'if he had never been born.'—*Mark* xiv. 21.

'And a highway shall be there, and a path,  
And it shall be called THE HOLY WAY;  
No unclean person shall pass through it,  
But He Himself shall be with them walking in the way,  
And the simple shall not mistake the path.'

*Isaiah* xxxv. 8, *by Barnes.*

## XVII.

### CHAPTER X.—VERSES 16-20.

THE infelicity of the ten tribes as governed by the former servant of Solomon, Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, contrasted with the prosperity of the twelve tribes during the reign of King Solomon.

Solomon's prophetic intimation of the fall of the royal house of Jeroboam, and of the utter extinction of his posterity, to the great joy of the ten tribes, abounding in provisions, wine, and riches.

Solomon's admonition to the disaffected to muzzle their tongues, to keep a strict guard over their words, and to abstain from seditious language.

- 16 Woe be unto thee, O land, whose king was a servant,  
And whose princes feast in the morning.
- 17 Blessed art thou, O land, whose king is the son of nobles,  
And whose princes feast in due season, for refection and not for revelry.
- 18 Through much indolence the roof falleth in,  
And through remissness of hands the house drippeth through,
- 19 To the joy of those possessing provisions and wine, which cheers life,  
And money, which supplies all things.
- 20 Revile not the king, no, not in thy thought,  
Even in the recesses of thy bedchamber revile not the rich man,  
For a bird of the air shall carry the report,  
And that which hath wings shall publish the matter.

#### VERSE 16.

Jeroboam, who had been SERVANT to King Solomon.

## VERSE 17.

The prosperity of the nation during the whole reign of Solomon is thus described in 1 Kings iv. 24, 25: ‘Solomon had dominion over all the region on this side of the river, from Tiphshah even to Azzah (that is, from Thapsacus on the Euphrates to Gaza on the coast of the Mediterranean, the most southern seaport of Phœnicia) over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.’

‘Solomon is said to be of noble and royal extraction, being the son of David, King of Israel. His princes are said to feast in due season, that is, “They eat to live, but do not live to eat.”’—*Henry*.

## VERSE 18.

The falling in of the flat roof of the house, and fissures in its walls admitting rain, betoken the entire and utter destruction of the whole edifice, the symbol of the demolition of the royal house of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin.

## VERSE 20.

Even Mendelssohn is compelled to admit that the four last lines of this chapter are undoubtedly poetry. If these four lines are poetry, on what principle is it denied that the rest of the Book of Ecclesiastes is poetry? These lines teach us, that known unto God are all human acts and sayings, however veiled in deepest mystery. In His own time, when it seemeth Him good, by His unseen Providence He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and unveil the secrets of human hearts.

‘Treason can not be wrought so secretly, but it will be known.’—*Bishops’ Bible*.

## XVIII.

## CHAPTER XI.—VERSES 1-6.

INJUNCTION of charity to the souls and bodies of men, with the promise annexed thereto, that the seed sown, the instruction given, and the charity bestowed in faith, shall not return void, but shall ultimately accomplish those eternal purposes of love which God hath graciously designed. They who sow in faith shall reap in joy.

As the clouds by their down-pour of rain fertilize the earth, and as a tree in whatsoever position it may fall remains the property of the owner to his benefit, so wealth expended to promote the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls is treasure laid up in heaven imperishable and everlasting.

- 1 CAST thy bread-corn upon the surface of the waters,  
For after many days thou shalt find it.
- 2 Give a portion to seven, and even to eight,

- For thou knowest not what evil existeth upon the earth.
- 3 When the clouds are full, they pour down rain over the earth,  
And when a tree falleth toward the south or toward the north,  
In the place where the tree falleth there it lieth.
- 4 He who observeth the wind will not sow,  
And he who regardeth the clouds will not reap.
- 5 As thou understandest not how the wind bloweth,  
As (thou understandest not) how the bones grow in the womb of  
the pregnant,  
Even so thou canst not understand the work of God,  
Who worketh all things.
- 6 In the morning sow thy seed,  
And in the evening let not thine hand rest,  
For thou canst not tell which shall succeed, this or that.  
Or whether they both shall be alike prosperous.

## VERSE 1.

The same Hebrew word is rendered *bread-corn* in Isaiah xxviii. 28. The imagery of this verse seems derived from the practice of sowing rice and other vegetable seed upon water covering and irrigating the soil. As the water subsides, the seed strikes its roots into the moistened earth, and produces an abundant harvest. Sir John Chardin thus describes the manner of planting rice: ‘They sow it UPON THE WATER, and, before sowing it, while the earth is covered with water, they cause the ground to be trodden by oxen, horses, and asses, who go mid-leg deep, and this is their way of preparing the ground for sowing.’ ‘Blessed are ye that sow beside (UPON) all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass’ (Isaiah xxxii. 20). The triennial transit of the fleet of Solomon outwards and homeward through the canal of Sesostris from Suez to the Nile, and down the Nile to the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, would render familiar to the crews of these vessels the Egyptian method of irrigating and sowing their lands, and would render this imagery intelligible to very many Israelites, who had heard from these sailors how the Egyptians fertilized and cultivated the soil of the valley of the Nile. Sir Gardner Wilkinson, in his *Modern Egypt and Thebes*, affirms the following productions to be sown in Egypt during the inundation of the Nile,—rice, Indian corn, millet, sugar-cane, cotton, coffee, indigo, madder, water-melons, onions. To this enumeration of the existing products of modern Egypt I cannot forbear adding the remark, that Herodotus, Theophrastus, Diodorus, Pliny, and Lucian, all attest the superabundant growth in ancient times of the Papyrus Nilotica, the Papyrus antiquorum, the Cyperus papyrus of Linnaeus, the paper-reed of Egypt. Indeed, throughout Western Asia and the Roman Empire, paper was generally manufactured from this native product of Egypt unto the days of St. John, and even after. This is evident from the Coptic version of 2 John 12, where the Greek word PAPER is rendered by the identical word which in Isaiah xviii. 2 signifies the PAPYRUS both in Hebrew and the Coptic translation. Nevertheless, not one plant either of the papyrus or lotus (both which plants were formerly so admired, valued, and abundant) now exists either in the Nile or in the marshes of Egypt. This is the statement of the late William Arnold

Bromfield, M.D., of Ryde, a first-rate botanist, who traversed the Nile from Alexandria to Khartoun, a distance of two thousand miles, and the lake Menzaleh, in quest, but found none. See pages 180 and 235 of his *Letters from Egypt and Syria* (kindly presented to me by his sister), printed for private circulation only. This entire extinction of the papyrus throughout the land of Egypt is corroborated by Sir Gardner Wilkinson: 'As far as my own observation goes, and from what I can learn from the people, the *Cyperus papyrus* is now unknown in Egypt.'—*Modern Egypt and Thebes*, vol. i. p. 441. The papyrus, though extinct throughout the length and breadth of Egypt, now flourishes in Sicily, in the lakes and rivers of Central Africa, near Khan Minyeh, in a stream to the north of Jaffa, and most luxuriantly in the impenetrable morasses which on all sides encircle the waters of Merom. See Tristram's *Land of Israel*, Livingstone's *Zambesi*, and Hayter's *Report upon the Herculean Manuscripts*, 1811, containing most splendid coloured plates of the papyrus growing in Sicily. The disappearance from Egypt of the papyrus and lotus, the lily of the Nile, so abundant and valued when Herodotus visited the land of Mizraim, is the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah xix. 6, 7: 'The reeds and the flags shall wither. The paper-reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, . . . shall wither, be driven away, and be no more.'

The beauty and pertinency of this imagery of casting bread-corn upon the surface of the waters will be self-apparent, when we consider that WATERS is the prophetic symbol for 'peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues' (*Apocalypse* xvii. 15).

'Thy bread-corn' signifies that which is thine own, and has been honestly acquired. Henry justly remarks, 'It is no charity, but injury, to give that which is none of our own to give.' Our bread-corn should be seed-corn. Our mercies should be imparted in charity to others, that others may share with us in the bounties of heaven.

The covenant-promise made in this verse to the spiritual sower of seed in God's vineyard is not the assurance of a present, but of a future harvest of souls. Instantaneous conversions and present revivals, blessed be God, do indeed occur, but they form the exception, not the rule. As the cereal seed cast into the ground remains latent in the earth before the appearance of 'first the blade, then the ear, and after that of the full corn in the ear,' so in general the seed of the gospel, sown by man and implanted by the Spirit in the human heart, first imperceptibly progresses and matures, and secondly takes root downwards, and bears fruit upward to God's glory, and man's eternal salvation.

#### VERSE 3.

As the clouds, saturated with moisture by evaporation, pour down rain to irrigate and fertilize the earth, so believers, recipients of spiritual and temporal blessings from their Heavenly Father, are obligated with those blessings to benefit the souls and bodies of men. As a tree, in whatever direction it may fall, remains the property of the owner; so wealth employed to God's glory is not treasure lost, but will receive its reward of grace in the world to come.

#### VERSE 4.

To understand the application of this verse, we must bear in mind that in Judea there are only two seasons, winter and summer. Winter, or the wet season, commences with the early rain, which generally falls in October, is characterized by continuous wet, with brief intermissions, and terminates with the latter rain, which falls in April or May. From May to October is the dry season, during which the sky is cloudless; there is no rain, but very heavy dew. The early or sprouting rain moistens the arid earth, qualifies it for cultivation and



sowing, and causeth the seed sown to take root downward and bear fruit upward. The latter or harvest rain fills and plums the ears before the ingathering of the seed-crops. Hence the agriculturist of Judea must be prompt to plough and plant his land immediately after the early rains, lest the subsequent heavy showers of winter should arrest field-operations; and must quickly gather into his garner the precious bread-corn, as soon as the fields are white and ripe for the harvest. See Robinson's *Physical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 263-268. The two fixed and determinate seasons of Palestine essentially differ from the variable uncertain climate of the British Isles. The imagery of this verse is derived from the climate of Palestine, not from the climate of England. The moral taught by this Palestinian imagery is, that God's children should be always ready to every good work, to promote the spiritual and temporal interests of man, knowing that, in due season, they shall reap, if they faint not; that their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord; that Christ will say to them: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto me.'

## VERSES 1-6.

These six verses, chiefly and almost exclusively admonitory of charity to the souls of men, seem a special exhortation to God's children to be faithful witnesses for Christ. I suggest this paraphrase:—

Make known Messiah, the bread of life, to sinners of mankind, because labour for Christ shall not be in vain in the Lord. Sow the seed of the gospel broadcast, for thou knowest not the extent of evil in the world. As the clouds saturated with moisture irrigate and fertilize the earth, and as a tree prostrated by storm remains the property of the owner, so the seed of the gospel you sow in faith shall prosper whereunto God hath sent it. As he who, after the early rain, delays to plough and sow, as he who, after the latter rain, omits to reap, so baneful are procrastination and unfaithfulness in God's vineyard. None can trace the course of the wind, whence it cometh and whither it goeth, none can understand the growth of the embryo in the womb of the pregnant, so above the ken of human perception is every one born of the Spirit. In the morning of life propagate the gospel, in the evening of life labour for God in season and out of season, and be thou faithful unto death; for thou knowest not which of the twain shall most promote God's glory and man's salvation.

## XIX.

## CHAPTER XI. VERSE 7 TO CHAPTER XII. VERSE 8.

CHEERFULNESS and enjoyment of life are recommended to youth, who at the same time are solemnly warned against the deceit and sinfulness of the human heart, and are reminded that God will judge all men, and will bring into judgment every act of every man, whether it be good or evil.

Solomon enjoins the young to dedicate their youth to God, to walk in His faith, and fear, and love, and to prepare for death and judgment, that when death

shall sever their souls from their bodies, they may enter into that rest which remaineth to the people of God.

Graphie and inimitable allegorical portraitures of old age and death, and of their premonitory symptoms.

7 SWEET indeed is the light,

And cheering to the eyes to behold the sun.

8 Therefore, should a man live many years, let him rejoice in them all,

Yet let him remember the days of darkness, that they may be  
many ;

All that occurreth is vanity.

9 Rejoice, O young man, during thy youth,

And let thy heart cheer thee during the days of thy youth,

But O thou that walkest according to the ways of thine heart, and  
according to the sight of thine eyes,

Know thou that for all these things

God will bring thee into judgment.

10 Therefore remove sorrow from thine heart,

And dispel evil from thy body ;

For childhood and the morning of life are vanity.

XII.

1 Remember now thy Creators in the days of thy youth,

Before the days of evil come,

And the years draw nigh, wherein thou shalt say,

‘ I have no pleasure in them.’

2 Before the sun and the light both of the moon and of the stars are  
obscured,

And before the clouds return after rain ;

3 In the day when the guards of the house shall tremble,

And the men of might shall bow themselves,

And the grinders shall cease because they are few,

And those that look out of the windows shall become dim,

4 And the two-leaved street-doors shall be closed,

When the sound of grinding shall be low,

And he shall start up at the chirping of a bird,

And all the daughters of song shall be brought low.

5 Also he shall be afraid to ascend a height, and fears shall be in  
the way,

- And the almond shall disgust, and the locust shall be loathsome,  
 And concupiscence shall cease,  
 For man goeth to his everlasting home,  
 And the mourners go about the streets.
- 6 (Remember now thy Creators in the days of thy youth).  
 Before the silver cord is paralysed,  
 And the golden balls are sunken down,  
 And the bucket is broken at the spring,  
 And the coiled rope is run off at the well :
- 7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was,  
 And the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.
- 8 Vanity of vanities, saith Khohheleth,  
 Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

## CHAPTER XI. VERSES 7-9.

‘Solomon does not condemn science, prudence, mirth, riches, honours, etc., but only their abuse, viz., the useless studies, unreasonable pursuits, and immoderate desires of those who pervert God’s blessings to their own destruction.’—*Khohheleth*.

## VERSE 10.

I consider that, by metonymy, SORROW and EVIL are here substituted for the causes of sorrow and evil, and that the meaning of the verse is: ‘Abstain from sin, especially from youthful lusts, which will bring sorrow to thine heart, and evil and suffering to thy body.’

## CHAPTER XII. VERSE 1.

The Hebrew word rendered CREATORS is plural in 305 Hebrew manuscripts, more than a moiety of all the Hebrew manuscripts of Ecclesiastes which have been collated. This plural term CREATORS, implying a Trinity in Unity, that creation was the work of three Persons in one Godhead, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, is substantiated by the three following texts, according to the Hebrew verity: Gen. i. 26, ‘Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness.’ Isaiah liv. 5, ‘Thy Makers are thy husbands, Jehovah of Hosts is His name.’ Psalm cxlix. 2, ‘Let Israel rejoice in his Creators.’ See chapter v. 8, where THE HIGH ONES is predicated of God, and see Note thereon in the Critical Appendix. Cocceius, Parkhurst, and Julius Bate all render the word CREATORS in the plural. That many scribes should have substituted the singular noun in the place of the plural, and that the ancient versions should have rendered CREATOR instead of CREATORS, need excite no surprise, when we consider the ignorance of this sublime mystery in many Israelites, and the implacable hostility against it in many others. But that any monotheistic scribe should have written the plural, unless the plural was the reading of his protograph, seems an utter impossibility. Though, for some inscrutable reason, JEHOVAH, the incommunicable name of God, nowhere occurs in Ecclesiastes, yet the mystery implied in the combination of the singular noun JEHOVAH with the Hebrew plural ELOHIM (God) is clearly indicated in this passage.

*Days of Evil.*—‘The continuing of life is but the deferring of death.’—*Henry*.

## VERSE 2, LINE 1.

Obscuration and defect of mind, intellect, imagination, and memory, which enlighten man as the sun, and the moon, and the stars enlighten the universe.

## VERSE 2, LINE 2.

Incessant succession and recurrence of pains and griefs, of mental and bodily infirmities, as in humid regions rain incessantly follows rain.

## VERSE 3.

*The guards of the house*—the arms and hands.

*The men of might*—the thighs, legs, and feet.

‘When the firm columns bend  
Beneath its weight, unable to support  
The tottering fabric.’—*Khohcleth*.

*The grinders*—the teeth.

*Those that look out of the windows*—the eyes looking through their orbits.

## VERSE 4.

*The two-leaved street-doors*—the lips.

*The sound of grinding*—mastication from defect of teeth is noiseless and defective.

*Shall start up at the chirping of a bird*—sleep unsound and disturbed.

*Daughters of song*—deafness arising from the ears imperfectly conveying sounds of music or voice.

‘Music itself hath lost its charms, no more  
The sweetest voice or tuneful instrument  
Affect the deafen’d ear.’—*Khohcleth*.

## VERSE 5.

*The almond and the locust*.—Appetite, mastication, and digestion fail in old age. The almond-fruit and the edible locust, so desired and palatable in youthful days, are in old age loathed and rejected. Leviticus xi. 22 proves that the species of locust named by Solomon in this verse, miscalled in our version thereof and in Leviticus a *grasshopper*, was eaten by the Jews.

Niebuhr recounts four species of locusts eaten by the Moslem Arabs and Jews, but not by the Turks. He remarks: ‘Europeans do not understand how the Arabs can eat locusts with pleasure. The Arabs, who have had no intercourse with Christians, in their turn cannot believe that Christians can esteem as delicacies oysters, crabs, shrimps, lobsters, etc. etc.’ Niebuhr states that in all the towns from Babelmandeb to Bosra, locusts are brought to market strung together. And he enumerates many different methods of cooking locusts for food in Arabia.—*Description de l’Arabie*, par M. Niebuhr, p. 151.

‘The locusts are an agreeable, wholesome, and nutritious aliment. They are eaten as meat, are ground into flour, and made into bread. They are even an extensive article of commerce.’—Kitto’s *Biblical Cyclopædia*.

‘Locusts are here an article of food, nay, a dainty; and a good swarm of them is begged of heaven in Arabia no less fervently than it would be deprecated in India or in Syria. The locust of Arabia is a reddish-brown insect, twice or three times the size of its northern homonym, resembling a large prawn in appearance, and as long as a man’s little finger, which



it equals also in thickness. This locust, when boiled or fried, is said to be delicious, and boiled and fried accordingly they are to an incredible extent.'—Palgrave's *Arabia*, vol. ii. p. 138.

'Locusts have been eaten from olden times as well as the carob-pod. The acridophagi were locust-eaters, and locusts have been and still are objects of commerce, and are esteemed a delicacy with many from Morocco to the Persian Gulf.'—Cassell's *Bible Dictionary*.

That locusts were eaten by the ancients is evident from the sculptures from Konyunjik, now in the British Museum. See plate of men bearing dried locusts fastened on sticks, from these sculptures, in Fairbairn's *Imperial Bible Dictionary*, vol. ii. p. 106. Diodorus Siculus, Pliny, Shaw, Rawulf, Price, Jackson, Burekhardt, etc. etc., testify to the same facts.

#### VERSE 6.

*The silver cord*—the silvery or white shining tendons or ligaments, by which the muscles are attached to the bones, and by the elongation or contraction of which the limbs are moved.

*The golden balls*—the eye-balls sunken or pressed down in their sockets, and dimmed as regards their lustre or brightness. *Golden* may refer to the yellow cadaverous hue which the eyeballs assume in death.

*The bucket*, used in drawing water, alternatively filled and emptied—the heart, which draws up the blood from the body by the veins, empties the blood into the lungs, and thence, when the blood has received its vitalizing power from the absorption of oxygen, receives back the vital stream of life, and pours it through the arteries again into the body.

*The spring*—the lungs, the fountain or source of life, oxygenating the blood by scattering it in innumerable ramifications over the bronchial cells, and thus exposing it to the air.

*The coiled rope, or rope coiled round the windlass*—the circulation of the blood in the body figuratively denominated *the well*. From the body the venous blood is drawn, and into the body is again returned in never-ceasing circuitous flow, whilst life remains.

This allegory, thus interpreted, signifies :—

Before the silver tendons are paralysed,  
And the limbs have lost their power of motion,  
And the bright eyeballs are sunken in their sockets,  
And light and sight are extinguished in them,  
And the heart no longer fills with the stream of life,  
Because breath is excluded from the lungs,  
And the heart no longer pulsates,  
And circulation ceases in the body.

Thus sadly, yet oh how truthfully, does Khoheleth describe the baptism of death, the putting off the earthly tenement of clay, the separation of the corruptible from the incorruptible, the four stages of decay culminating in death, namely :—

Loss of power in the limbs,  
Loss of sight in the eyes,  
Loss of breath in the lungs and of pulsation in the heart,  
Loss of circulation in the body.

Then the vital stream being withdrawn, the materials of the body corrupt and fall to pieces, separating into the elementary atoms of dust, from which the tenement of clay was

constructed, whilst the soul ( $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ ) takes its flight to unknown space, and the spirit ( $\piνε\upsilon\mu\alpha$ ) returns to God who gave it—

Till the Lord of life has spoken,  
Till the chains of death are broken,  
Then to the body raised in might  
The Lamb shall give eternal light  
And a well of water flowing  
To His branches endless growing.  
Grafted in the heavenly tree,  
Saviour! let us live in Thee.

Then shall the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, the Resurrection and the Life, who is before all things, and by whom all things consist, reunite the scattered elements of dust, and build again the bones, and lay sinews (the silver cord) upon them, and bring flesh upon them, and cover them with skin, and put breath into them; and all, who have been planted together in the likeness of Christ's death, shall be planted together in the likeness of Christ's resurrection.

This allegorical language of the Book of Ecclesiastes manifestly indicates the circulation of the blood, discovered by the illustrious Dr. William Harvey, and first published by him at Frankfort, A.D. 1628. But this fact does not warrant the supposition of Dr. John Smith, that Solomon was himself acquainted with this mystery of the economy of the human frame, that Solomon discovered it, and that Dr. Harvey re-discovered it. Solomon and all the other writers of Scripture wrote as they were moved by the omniscient Spirit. But the inspired writers have handed down mysteries for our illumination, on whom the ends of the world are come, with the full import of which they themselves were but imperfectly acquainted. We have no warrant to assert that Solomon practised anatomy, or that he possessed that intimate knowledge of the structure of the human body which can only be acquired by dissection. Though the Bible contains the germs of true science, it was not designed to teach scientific truth, but to make men wise to salvation. These germs of science, interspersed in Scripture, demonstrate the omniscience and prescience of God.

For a full explanation of Solomon's allegorical portraiture of old age and death, the reader is referred to the ornate, concise, and classical volume of Dr. Mead, the elaborate dissertation of Dr. John Smith, and the philosophical, soul-stirring sermon of Bishop Horsley on Ecclesiastes xii. 7.

#### VERSE 7.

Man consists of two parts, of an immortal soul and an organized mortal body. Union of soul and body is life. Separation of soul and body is death. Re-animation and resurrection of the body, and its reunion with the soul, is resurrection-life,—when God's children shall arise in Christ's likeness, and shall be ever with the Lord. 'We all look, not only for the glorification of our SOULS, but of our BODIES in the life to come.'—(*Joseph Mede*.) To all whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, free from every defilement of soul and from every infirmity of body, possessing reunion with, and recognition of, all who have died in the Lord,—to them will ever be perfection of sanctification and plenitude of glory,—'what eye hath not seen, what ear hath not heard, and what it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive.'

Universality of death is the result of universality of sin. Both evidence man's need of a Mediator, mighty to save. Messiah is the resurrection and the life. Messiah, the good Shepherd, 'laid down His life for the sheep' (*John* x. 15), for all their sins, both original and actual. Messiah, 'the propitiation for the whole world' (*1 John* ii. 2), 'tasted of death for

every man' (*Hebrews* ii. 9), having made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the original or birth-sin of every child of Adam, of the lost as well as of the saved, so that the whole human race have a beneficial interest in Christ's redemption, and all who die in infancy, before they attain the knowledge of good and evil, are redeemed from eternal perdition. Thus far more than a moiety of the human race have been redeemed by Messiah's vicarious blood-shedding from sin and death and hell, and have been saved with an everlasting salvation.

## VERSE 8.

*Khoheleth*, that is, the REPENTANT INVALID. See note on i. 1, 2, Preface, and Critical Appendix.

## XX.

## CHAPTER XII.—VERSES 9-12.

THE design of Solomon in writing this book was to impart spiritual knowledge in sententious Oriental diction, primarily adapted to Jewish tastes and feelings.

This book was written under the inspired guidance of the Holy Spirit, and is, in common with all the other canonical Scriptures, the voice of the good and gracious Shepherd to all nations, languages, tongues, and peoples.

In this book God speaks to man. From this book man should seek Divine admonition. In exact proportion as human writings contradict this or other portions of the Bible, so far they emanate from him who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, and ought summarily to be rejected by all.

- 9 FURTHERMORE, because Khoheleth was wise,  
 He again taught the people knowledge,  
 For he had pondered, and investigated, and arranged many proverbs.  
 10 Khoheleth sought to find out acceptable words,  
 And to write righteousness, even words of truth.  
 11 The words of the wise resemble goads,  
 And resemble plantation-fences,  
 They are sent forth from one Shepherd  
 To be ingatherers (unto Him).  
 12 And further, by these, my son, be thou admonished :  
 Of making many books there is no end,  
 And much study is a weariness of the flesh.

## VERSES 9 AND 10.

*Khoheleth*, that is, the REPENTANT INVALID. See note on i. 1, 2, Preface, and Critical Appendix.



## VERSE 9.

*Was wise*—was of the number of those who were not only recipients of heavenly wisdom to their own salvation, but who were inspired to write, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, Holy Scriptures, which make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

*He again taught.*—He had previously instructed the people in the books of Proverbs and Canticles. This Book was his third appointed task, to testify to them of Messiah, to teach them how to live and how to die, to edify their souls, and make them wise unto salvation.

The Hebrew word rendered PROVERBS signifies also PARABLES, and therefore comprehends both the Book of Proverbs and also the Parable or Allegory of the Canticles. The remark of Jerome is very striking: ‘For the instruction of the people Solomon composed proverbs and parables, which present an external signification, but convey also an internal recondite sense. That parables teach more than the patent meaning of the words is evident from the fact, that our Lord spake to the multitude in proverbs and parables, but privately expounded their meaning to His disciples. Hence it is self-evident, that the teaching of the Book of Proverbs is not, as simple folk imagine, always externally patent, but, as gold is extracted from the bowels of the earth, as the kernel is found inside the nut, as chestnuts are enveloped in rough, hirsute, prickly pericarps, so in the Book of Proverbs the Divine teaching is to be laboriously and diligently investigated and sought out.’

## VERSE 10.

To write righteousness is to write the righteous words of God, to write God’s righteous will indefectibly, without human addition or subtraction. Solomon could not so have written unless he had been enlightened by the inspiration of the eternal Spirit. Furthermore, Solomon clothed the righteous will of God in scripture acceptable to man, in idiomatic language, perspicuous and appropriate both to the Jews and to the neighbouring nations.

## VERSE 11.

All the words of Scripture emanate from the Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, who by the Spirit’s infallibility enlightened and guided all the writers of the canonical Scriptures, so that Scripture, as it came from the Deity, is gold seven times purified in the fire, free from all dross and all human adulteration, defect, or error. Equality of inspiration pertains to every portion of God’s Word. The Old Testament is as much inspired as the New Testament. Biblical history is as much inspired as prophecy. The Epistles are as much inspired as the four Gospels, as the very words recorded to have been spoken by Christ during His incarnation. These words stimulate the slothful, the indolent, the lethargic, to faith and obedience, and fence and guard from sin, the world, and the devil, the trees of righteousness, which God hath planted. The words of Scripture impressed on the heart by the Spirit are God’s instrument to ingather souls into the kingdom of grace, and to prepare them for the kingdom of glory. As in verse 9 Solomon calls himself WISE in reference to the wisdom manifested in his inspired writings, so in verse 11 he applies the term WISE to all the other writers of the canonical Scriptures.

The exclusion of the Scriptures from the national schools of Ireland, and from Government education in India, is national dishonour to the God of the Bible. England’s sin, unless departed from and repented of, will cause England’s punishment. Education from which the Bible is systematically excluded is not from above, but from beneath.



## VERSE 12.

‘Rabbi Solomon interprets the words “by these, my son, be admonished,” of the books of sacred Scripture. He writes: “And further by the books of sacred Scripture, my son, be admonished.”’—*Nicholas de Lyra*.

Seek instruction primarily from the Word of God. Test all human writings by this infallible standard: ‘To the law and to the testimony: if men speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them’ (*Isaiah* viii. 20). How much error is current in the world, because men draw their religion from the turbid streams of human invention, in preference to the pellucid fountain of eternal truth, the Word of God!

Nothing human—not books, nor arts, nor literature, nor science—can impart salvation. None can sincerely and experimentally say: ‘This God is MY God for ever and ever, He shall be MY guide unto death,’ ‘Behold God is MY salvation, I will trust and not be afraid,’ but they who have been born from above, who have been taught and enlightened by the Spirit, who by regeneration have been grafted into Christ, who by the sovereignty of Divine grace have been made fruit-bearing branches of the true Vine, having the law of God written upon the fleshly tablets of their hearts. Instated in the everlasting covenant,

‘These all to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given:  
More happy, but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in heaven.’

## XXI.

## CHAPTER XII.—VERSES 13, 14.

The final section of this didactic poem inculcates three fundamental truths:

1. That the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
2. That this fear, implanted in the heart by the Spirit, will ever be productive of prompt obedience to God’s will, and of the discharge of all prescribed duties to God and man.
3. That the judgment-day, when ‘the dead, small and great, shall stand before God,’ when ‘the books shall be opened,’ when ‘the dead shall be judged out of those things written in the books,’ will be a day of universal revelation, universal retribution, universal separation of the sheep from the goats, universal consignment to sempiternity of glory or sempiternity of misery.

13 To the conclusion from this whole disquisition let us be obedient.

‘FEAR THOU GOD, AND OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS,’

Because this (conclusion) every man (should obey),

14 Because God will bring every work into judgment,

With respect to every secret matter,

Whether it be good or whether it be evil.

## VERSES 13 AND 14.

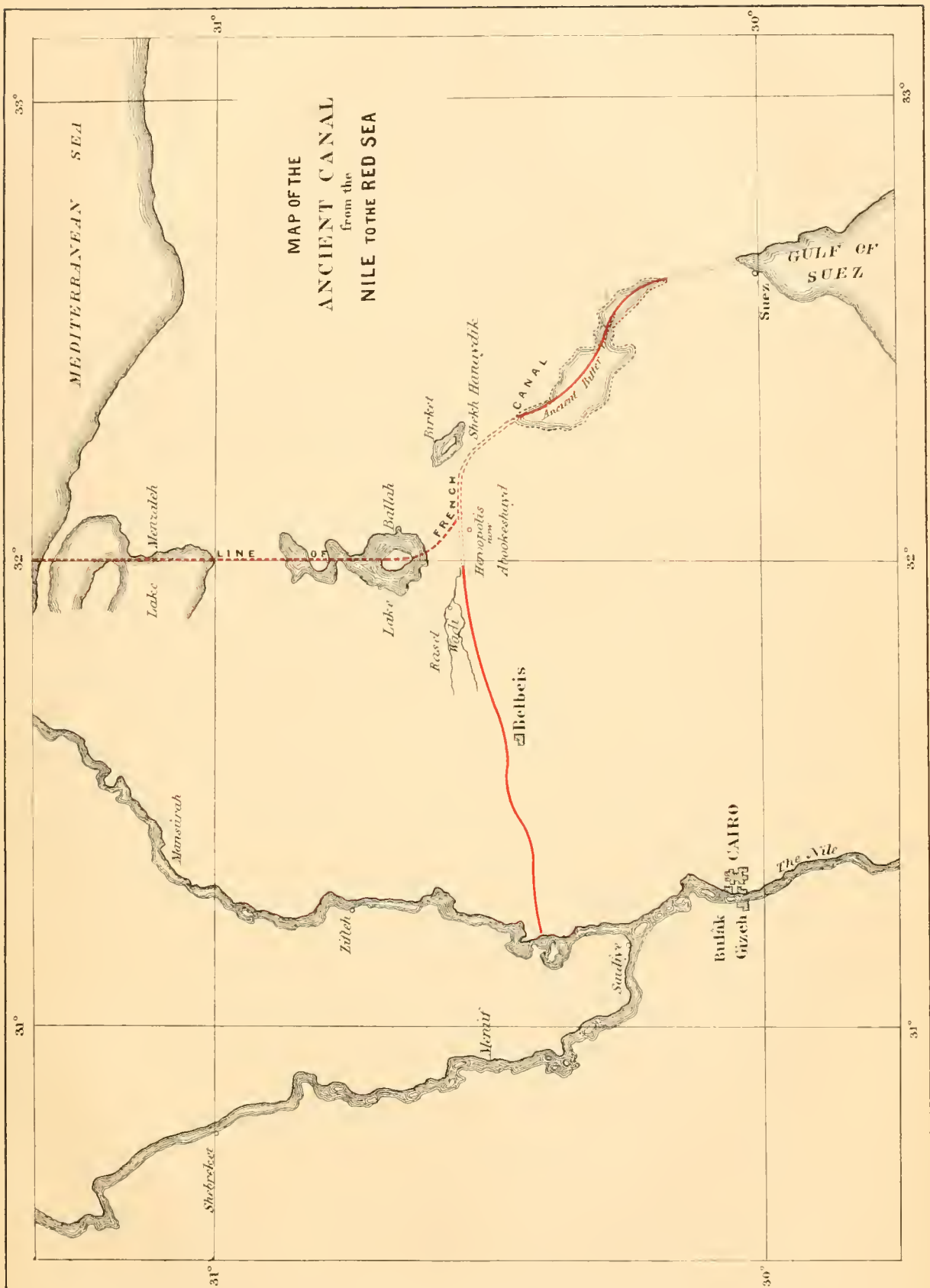
‘ Here let us end

The great inquiry. Since not wealth nor power,  
Nor pleasure's tempting charms, nor even those  
Of science, still more luring, better skilled  
To flatter human pride ; in fine, since nought  
BELOW THE SUN can solid bliss afford,  
Where shall we find that SOVEREIGN GOOD, for which  
The soul is ever panting ? Hear the sum  
Of our instructions : Whatsoe'er THE WISE  
In every age have taught, is all compressed  
In one short precept : let an awful sense  
Of God's almighty power and boundless love  
Influence thy life, and keep His righteous laws ;  
Thou need'st to seek no farther ; this the soul  
And substance of religion ; all beside,  
An empty shadow : For this end alone  
Was man created ; his whole happiness  
On this depends.'—*Khohcleth*.











PROOFS THAT THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS EXCAVATED A NAVIGABLE CANAL FROM THE NILE TO THE RED SEA, AND THAT THE NAVIGATION OF THIS CANAL WAS THE ONLY ROUTE WHEREBY THE MERCHANT FLEET OF SOLOMON COULD SAIL FROM EZION-GEBER TO TARSHISH, AND FROM TARSHISH TO EZION-GEBER EVERY THREE YEARS.

THE larger portion of the treasures of gold and silver amassed by Solomon was imported into Palestine by his two fleets, built at Ezion-geber on the Red Sea. One fleet navigated the length of the Red Sea and of the Persian Gulf, sailing round the peninsula of Arabia, and coasting and trafficking with the entire sea-shore of the kingdom of the Queen of Sheba. This fleet imported the greatest part of the gold, also almg-trees and precious stones. Whether this fleet traded as far as Hindostan writers are not agreed. To the best of my knowledge no PROOF has ever been adduced that the mercantile marine of Solomon ever traded with India, or that the wise and royal author of Ecclesiastes had any DIRECT communication with any country or people eastward of the river Indus. The other fleet 'WENT TO TARSHISH' (2 Chron. ix. 21), and is therefore called 'A NAVY OF TARSHISH' (1 Kings x. 22), and brought back triennially a freight of 'gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.' I prefer to render 'GOLD, SILVER, ELEPHANTS' TEETH, TRUNKS OF TREES, AND MASTS FOR SHIPS.' The commodities represented by the two last nouns were constituent parts of the freight or cargo imported into Ezion-geber by the Tarshish fleet. Apes and peacocks, if SOMETIMES brought for amusement or exhibition, could scarcely be designated part of the triennial freight. A writer of the past generation shrewdly asks: 'Would Solomon's dealing in such commodities have been any proof of his wisdom?' We would also remark, that gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks were not of bulk sufficient for the freight of a single ship, much less of this NAVY OF TARSHISH. Lexicographers have concocted derivations of these two words from the languages of India, languages altogether unknown to Solomon. These terms occur only in Kings and Chronicles, and are confessedly and by universal consent foreign nouns embodied in the Hebrew Scriptures. Both nouns occur in Coptic, which was both the mother tongue of the daughter of Pharaoh, the first wife of

King Solomon, and the language of Lower Egypt, traversed by this Tarshish fleet. They exactly correspond with the Hebrew terms in Kings and Chronicles. The former noun will be found in page 114 of the Coptic Lexicon of La Croze and Scholtz, edited by Woide, namely, 'ⲭⲁⲓ, στελεχος, ARBOR TRUNCUS CAUDEX,' and in page 272 of the Coptic Lexicon of Peyron, where it is rendered 'ροθμην, RAMUS, PALMES, στελεχος, TRUNCUS.' The second noun occurs in page 25 of the Coptic Lexicon of La Croze and Scholtz, namely, 'Θυρ, MALUS, ARBOR NAVIS,' and in page 51 of the Coptic Lexicon of Peyron, where it is rendered 'MALUS NAVIS.'

I could have wished to corroborate the meaning of these two Coptic terms by reference to the dialect of Upper Egypt, but a good Sahidic lexicon is yet a desideratum. Dr. Ford, Principal of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, whilst editing the remains of the Sahidic New Testament, prepared a Sahidic lexicon for the press, and showed it to me a few weeks before his decease, stating his intention to publish it, and also a Sahidic version of Job. After the death of Dr. Ford, I called on his son Frederick Ford, Esq., but could obtain no information respecting this manuscript. The disappearance of this Sahidic lexicon is an irreparable loss to Oriental literature. This manuscript Sahidic lexicon filled a quarto book about the size of the Arabic Grammar of Erpenius, edited by Golius. It was most carefully written. Whilst I was turning over its pages Dr. Ford stated that it was quite ready for the press, and that on receipt of letters he expected from Germany, he meant to publish both this Sahidic lexicon and the Sahidic version of Job. The next intelligence I received of Dr. Ford was the announcement of his decease. This did not surprise me, as when I called he received me in his study, in his dressing-gown and slippers, being *aeger*. Never will be erased from my memory his condescending kindness in so freely conversing with me, then an undergraduate, on Oriental literature, and showing me his literary treasures, especially the subscription copy of Walton's Polyglott, formerly belonging to Bishop Butler.

Prime mast-timber was more essential to ancient than to modern ships. Ancient ships, even carrying 600 men, were almost entirely propelled by one large square sail suspended on one mast. As the strain of the mast on the hull rendered it necessary to frap or undergird, and ropes for frapping were an essential part of the ship's gear, so the strain of the huge square sail on the mast required the choicest and toughest wood for the mast. The import of mast-timber into Ezion-geber would be far less expensive than the land-carriage of trees from Lebanon to Ezion-geber. If it be objected to this proposed rendering from the Coptic, that the ancient versions and our authorized version concur, we reply, that no writer has ever followed implicitly and in all things the ancient versions. Do not the ancient versions designate Solomon A PREACHER, who never preached one sermon in all his life?

The supposition of a Tarshish in the Indian Ocean is a myth. No Tarshish in the Indian Ocean is recorded in any history, sacred or profane, nor is there any historic mention of ships having been built by King Solomon on the shores of the



Mediterranean Sea. The transportation by land of the 'NAVY OF TARSHISH' from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, and from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, seems utterly impracticable. These are groundless inventions concocted to evade a difficulty, and to explain away the Scriptural assertion, that ships were built at Ezion-geber to sail to Tarshish. The very building of this fleet at a port of the Red Sea evidently shows that the Red Sea was its home-station. If its voyages terminated on the coast of the Mediterranean, why did not Hiram construct it at Tyre, and thus obviate the Herculean labour of transportation? The only Tarshish of Scripture is a seaport on the coast of Spain, not far from the Straits of Gibraltar, and the only two courses whereby a fleet could SAIL from the Red Sea to Tarshish, are by the circumnavigation of Africa, or by the transit of the ancient canal of Sesostris, *alias* Rameses II., from Suez to the Nile, descending the Nile, and coasting the southern shores of the Mediterranean to the Straits of Gibraltar. (See Map of Africa.) The *Periplus* of Hanno, and other recorded attempts to circumnavigate Africa, demonstrate the utter impracticability of the former course triennially by any merchant fleet of antiquity. The length of the outward and homeward voyage, circumnavigating Africa, would exceed 30,000 miles—more than the circumference of the earth!!! The length of the voyage forwards and backwards by the canal of Sesostris would be less than 5500 miles, of which the distance from Suez to the Mediterranean would be inland navigation in smooth water.

In this age, when infidelity so lamentably prevails, difficulties in the interpretation of Scripture, which may be stumbling-blocks to sincere inquirers, demand investigation and solution. The Scriptures state that Solomon built his fleets at Ezion-geber, and ascribe to him no other port of ship-building. They likewise assert, that one of his merchant-fleets traded triennially with Tarshish. The problem how ancient merchant-ships built on the Red Sea could be navigated to Spain has ever been a *crux interpretum*. The transit by the canal of Sesostris solves the problem, and demonstrates the practicability of what the Scriptures assert. The merchant-ships of Solomon, especially those of his Tarshish fleet, were doubtless of the finest build and of the largest size then constructed by the ancients, yet were solely and exclusively employed as coasting-vessels. Both fleets continuously hugged the shore, and probably never on any one occasion sailed out of sight of land.

If it be asked, how it can be proved that the Tarshish fleet of Solomon navigated the canal of Sesostris, the reply is that 1 Kings ix. 26 asserts that Solomon built his ships at Ezion-geber, and 2 Chron. ix. 21 asserts that the KING'S SHIPS WENT TO TARSHISH; and 2 Chron. xx. 36 teaches that Jehoshaphat built ships at Ezion-geber 'TO GO TO TARSHISH.' The word of God cannot be broken. To effect this VOYAGE, the author submits, there are only two courses,—one by the circumnavigation of Africa, rounding the Cape of Good Hope; the other by the transit of this canal. The former course was impracticable to the merchant-ships and seaman-ship of antiquity. Hence of necessity results the conclusion, that Scripture implies, though it does not specifically state, the adoption of the other course, namely, the

navigation of the canal of Sesostris by this merchant fleet of Solomon. Had not this fleet passed through Egypt, and communicated to Israel the Egyptian method of irrigation and agriculture, how could the imagery of chap. xi. 1, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days,' have been intelligible to the Jews in the days of Solomon?

It would be most singular, should the engineering skill of ancient Egypt in the days of Sesostris surpass in efficiency the skill of the engineers displayed in the construction of the French canal from the Mediterranean Sea to Suez. The level of the Mediterranean is ordinarily the same as the level of the Red Sea. Hence the French canal must be a gigantic dike filled with stagnant water. The Egyptian canal, on the contrary, having its course from the Nile, which empties itself by rapid currents into the Mediterranean, had a continuous flow of water from the Nile to Suez. The Egyptian canal was most efficient for navigation, and only required occasional excavation to remove the sand which had drifted or fallen into it. Time will show whether the French canal will prove as efficiently navigable as that constructed by Sesostris; and will manifest the relative advantages and disadvantages of a stagnant canal contrasted with those resulting from a current stream.

Strabo, Pliny, Aristotle, and other authorities, affirm the existence of this canal, and refer its formation to Rameses II., Sesostris, or other ancient Pharaohs. Herodotus ascribes its original excavation to Pharaoh-Necho, misled by, or misunderstanding, his Egyptian informant, and attributes to Pharaoh-Necho credit which solely pertains to Sesostris, *alias* Rameses II., who originated this canal, whereas Pharaoh Necho merely cleansed it from accumulations of sand, and restored its pristine navigation. Some parts at least of this canal, now filled with the sand of the desert, were in use long after the Christian era. Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter would secure him its free and uninterrupted navigation.

The length of this canal must have exceeded one hundred miles from its circuitous route, traces of which are now in many parts visible from Suez to the north of Belbays. From Suez, the direction was north through the ancient Bitter Lakes, and then by a detour its course was westerly, passing by or near to Shekh-Hanaydik, El-Rigabeh, and Ras-el-Wadi, to the Nile. (See the sketch-map of this ancient canal.) Herodotus states that the navigation of this canal occupied four days. Now Strabo informs us that the current always flowed from the Nile to the Red Sea, whereby the water of the Bitter Lakes was sweetened, and fish and waterfowl, previously unknown in the lakes, abounded. As Herodotus obtained his information in Egypt, it seems to follow that the navigation of four days was WITH THE CURRENT from the Nile to the Red Sea; but that AGAINST THE CURRENT, from the Red Sea to the Nile, the navigation would occupy a proportionably longer time.

The width of this canal Herodotus affirms to have been sufficient for the passage of two triremes side by side. The existing mounds, from one and two feet to fifteen and twenty feet in height, are generally from thirty to forty yards apart,

caused by the falling in of the sand from each side. The canal was doubtless of different widths according to local requirements, but appears in every part to have been sufficiently wide and deep to admit the navigation side by side of two of the largest vessels of antiquity throughout its whole extent.

Vestiges of ancient towns built on the borders of this canal are now clearly to be traced. Among the *débris* of Abookesayd or E-Sagheea (probably Heroopolis) Sir Gardner Wilkinson discovered a monument bearing the sculptures and name of Rameses II., otherwise called Sesostris, the original projector and excavator of this canal.

See Herodotus II. 158.

Strabo XVII. 1, 25, 26.

Zach's *Monatl. Correspondenz*, vol. xxvi. p. 385.

Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 69.

„ *Egypt and Thebes*, vol. i. p. 310.

Robinson's *Palestine*, vol. i. pp. 586, 588.

See also *Gesenii Thesaurus Linguae Hebrææ* under תַּרְשִׁישׁ, and Vitringa on Isaiah, in which elaborate commentary the author establishes two positions—1. That the Tarshish of the Old Testament is a seaport on the coast of Spain; and 2. That the circumnavigation of Africa was impracticable by the merchant-ships of Solomon.

Solomon, by his two merchant-fleets built at Ezion-geber, annually imported from Ophir and Tarshish into Judea six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold. Exodus xxxviii. 25 and 26 proves that the weight of the Jewish talent exceeded one hundred pounds Troy weight. Each pound of pure gold without alloy would be worth full fifty pounds. So that Solomon's importation of gold greatly exceeded three millions of pounds sterling. This computation is grounded on the supposition, that the Hebrew talent of gold was equivalent in weight to the Hebrew talent of silver. Madden and other authors of eminence infer from a passage in Josephus, which, however, admits of a different interpretation, that the talent of gold was double the weight of the talent of silver, and Madden estimates its weight at 1,290,000 grains. According to this calculation, the value of gold annually imported by Solomon was more than double the amount I have stated above. To this yearly import into Judea of six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, be the value more or less, we must add Solomon's importation from Arabia, Lower Egypt, North Africa, and Spain, of silver, ivory, precious stones, spices, and timber—the precious metals he purchased from chapmen and others who trafficked on their own account (1 Kings x. 15, and 2 Chronicles ix. 14)—the presents and contributions he received from neighbouring monarchs and princes—and the taxation he levied on Judea (1 Kings xii. and 2 Chronicles x.) Thus, in wealth chiefly acquired by this lucrative commerce, as well as in administrative wisdom, Solomon surpassed all his contemporaries, and was incomparably

the richest and wisest monarch who ever swayed a sceptre. By this prosperity Satan blinded his eyes, secularized his heart, and caused his backsliding and temporary apostasy. Few men can bear prosperity. The fall of Solomon should warn all to watch and pray against sin, the world, and the devil. 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall' (1 *Corinthians* x. 12). 'What I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH' (*Mark* xiii. 37).



## CRITICAL APPENDIX.

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### DE CARMINE DIDACTICO.

Alterum est Salomonis opus ad hanc speciem Didacticam pariter referendum, cui titulus קהלת, sive Concionator ; vel potius fortasse Sapientia Concionatrix : in quo quanquam multæ sint passim interspersæ disjunctæ sententiæ, multæ parabolæ, alia tamen est totius ratio, alius color, longe dispar stylus. Etenim una est universi operis forma, unum et simplex argumentum, De rerum humanarum Vanitate, sub persona Salomonis, in perdifficili quæstione dubitantis, in utramque partem disputantis, et ex ancipiti cogitandi cura sese tandem expedientis. Stylus autem hujusce operis plane singularis : dictio est humilis plerumque et submissa, sed imprimis obscura, sæpe laxa, et dissoluta, et sermoni proprior ; nec in compositione et structura multum viget poetieus character : QUÆ FORSAN VIDERI POSSUNT ARGUMENTI NATURÆ ALIQUATENUS TRIBUENDA.—Lowth, *De Sacra Poesi Hebræorum*.

Metricum sane esse hunc librum, pariter ac Davidis Psalmos, Proverbia, ECCLESIASTEN, Canticum Canticorum, confessa res est.—*Medica Sacra*, Auctore Richardo Mead, M.D.

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### KHOHELETH.

CHAPTER I. 1, 2, 12 ; VII. 27 ; XII. 8, 9, 10.

On the same principle as **עלם** is rendered by Hitzlig, and other eminent critics, INTELLIGENCE, from the Arabic, because the significations of that noun in Hebrew are inappropriate to Ecclesiastes iii. 11 ; and as **קפים** and **תנ״ים** are interpreted from foreign languages, because they occur not in Hebrew ; so I give to קהלת, Khoheleth (the appellation Solomon predicates of himself), its signification in Arabic, because Solomon was neither a preacher nor a convener of assemblies. Khoheleth is indeed a noun ‘D’UNITÉ ou plutôt D’INDIVIDUALITÉ,’ deriving its form from the Arabic. ‘ Il semble que, le ; ajouté à la fin de ces adjectifs verbaux soit destiné à les transformer en des noms D’INDIVIDUALITÉ en sorte que **كَلَامٌ** signifieroit proprement UN SAVANT UNIQUE EN SON GENRE. On a observé avec beaucoup de justesse que

cette forme INTENSITIVE paroît avoir aussi été admise dans la langue Hébraïque, et qu'elle rend raison de l'espèce d'anomalie du mot קהלת, qui, sous une forme en apparence féminine, est toujours en concordance avec des verbes du genre masculin, et est effectivement employé comme attribut de Salomon, et, par conséquent comme un nom ou adjectif masculin.'—*Grammaire Arabe par A. I. Silvestre de Saey*. Castell in his *Heptaglott Lexicon* gives this signification to the verb in Arabic: 'I. conj. exaruit cutis pee, ex multâ spirituali exercitatione. V. conj. exaruit cutis pee, ex multa spirituali exercitatione, lenté incessit, infirmo statu fuit, marcuit. VII. conj. Debilis fuit.' And Freytag, in his *Arabic Lexicon*, renders the verb: 'I. Aridus fuit multo religioso cultu. V. Lente et infirmis passibus incessit. VII. Marcuit, debilis fuit, coneiditque ob senectutem.' This verb occurs not in the Koran, nor in the Consensus of Hariri, nor in Arabscah's *Life of Tamerlane*. May it not have been brought into Judea by the Queen of Sheba, or by Solomon's mercantile marine from Ophir or some other Arabian port? Schroeder derives and interprets it from the Arabic: 'קהלת proprie PÆNITENTIA, ut videtur, per metonymiam sumtum pro HOMINE PÆNITENTE, quo nomine Salomo in Ecclesiaste se insignivit.'—See his *Hebrew Grammar*, p. 306.

Professor Lee asserts, that 'the Hebrew ה and the Arabic ه added to nouns, supply a sort of SUPERLATIVE power,' equivalent to SINGULAR, EXCELLENT, in English. See his *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 145, and under קהלת, Khoheleth, p. 525.

As קהלת is confessedly a form derived from the Arabic, why should it not be rendered according to its signification in Arabic, which signification is alone appropriate to the character and circumstances of Solomon?

The authority of Castell, Schroeder, Baron de Saey, Professor Lee, and Freytag, is an ample justification of the interpretation of KHOHELETH proposed in this volume—an interpretation strictly accordant with Oriental idiom and historic verity.

#### CHAPTER I. VERSES 1 and 12.

מלך drops the formative ל in the Benoni participle.

#### CHAPTER I. VERSE 7.

The Hebrew verb מלא is rendered TO OVERFLOW (*Joshua* iii. 15). The substantive derived from this verb signifies in *Syriac* FLUXUS, IMPETUS AQUARUM, INUNDATIO, ILLUVIES.—Castell's *Heptaglott Lexicon*.

#### CHAPTER I. VERSE 8.

ולא is the reading of twenty MSS., two editions of fifteenth century, LXX., Arabic, Syriac, and Chaldee.

## CHAPTER I. VERSE 11.

The two Hebrew words ראשנים and אחרנים are interpreted of persons, not of things, both in the Syriac, Arabic, and Chaldee, and ought to be so rendered wherever they occur alone without substantives. Job xviii. 20 amply justifies the rendering of this verse.

## CHAPTER I. VERSE 12.

Schroeder affirms in his Hebrew Grammar that the Hebrew preterite frequently answers to the English present tense: 'Præteritum sæpe de eo quod quis facere solet, vel quod omni tempore eodem modo se habet *αοριστος* usurpatur, atque per nostrum præsens commode exponitur' (p. 334). Rödiger states that 'a frequent secondary use of the præter tense of the Hebrew is to indicate a state of being, which, beginning at some former period, still continues to exist at the time of narration.' הוה is thus rendered in our English authorized version in the following texts: 'And now I AM BECOME (הייתי) two bands' (Genesis xxxii. 10); 'I AM (הייתי) in derision daily' (Jeremiah xx. 7); 'I AM (הייתי) like a drunken man' (Jeremiah xxiii. 9); 'I AM (הייתי) a father to Israel' (Jeremiah xxxi. 9); 'I AM (הייתי) like a broken vessel' (Psalm xxxi. 12).

## CHAPTER I. VERSE 13.

השמש is the reading of sixty-one MSS., one edition of fifteenth century, Syriac, Chaldee, and Vulgate.

## CHAPTER I. VERSE 16.

עך is here rendered IN in all the ancient versions, and by Noldius in very many texts.

## CHAPTER II. VERSE 3.

השמש is the reading of two Hebrew MSS., LXX., Syriac, Vulgate, and Arabic. UNDER THE SUN occurs twenty-five times in Ecclesiastes. UNDER HEAVEN occurs only once (iii. 1).

## CHAPTER II. VERSE 25.

ממנו is the reading of eight MSS., LXX., Syriac, and Arabic.

## CHAPTER III. VERSE 1.

*Every individual*—so Chaldee and x. 3.

## CHAPTER III. VERSE 12.

*Cheerfully to do good.* 'It is a frequent case in Hebrew that when two verbs immediately follow each other, either with or without the copula between them, the first of them serves merely to qualify the second, and must be rendered adverbially.' --Moses Stuart's *Hebrew Grammar*, p. 370.

## CHAPTER III. VERSE 15.

The Vulgate, which seems followed in Cranmer's and the Bishops' Bibles, reads: 'Et Deus instaurat quod abiit.'

*God will disclose the past.* In vindication of this rendering, see the note of Schultens on Job iii. 4.

## CHAPTER III. VERSE 21.

וּמִי is the rendering of sixty-six MSS., two editions of fifteenth century, one edition 1518, LXX., Syriac, and Arabic.

In rendering these passages interrogatively, and in translating הָ אֵן נֹחַ, I am supported by the Chaldee, LXX., Syriac, and Arabic versions. TO DESCEND TO THE EARTH is synonymous with DESTRUCTION, ANNIHILATION (Jeremiah xiii. 18; Ezekiel xxvi. 11).

## CHAPTER IV. VERSES 1, 7.

שׁוּב in Kal, followed by another verb, denotes TO DO AGAIN what is expressed by the latter verb.

## CHAPTER V. 7, 8.

גִּבּוֹרִים, THE MOST HIGH ONES, is plural, like CREATORS, xii. 1, and Psalm cxlix. 2, and like 'Thy MAKERS are thy HUSBANDS,' Isaiah liv. 5. and like ELOHIM *passim*. These plural nouns and the following texts manifestly prove a plurality of Persons in the Godhead: Genesis iii. 22, xi. 7, xx. 13, xxxi. 53, xxxv. 7; Deuteronomy iv. 7, v. 26; Joshua xxiv. 19; 1 Samuel iv. 8; 2 Samuel vii. 23; Psalm lviii. 12; Proverbs ix. 10, xxx. 3; Job v. 1; Isaiah vi. 3 and 8; Jeremiah x. 10, xxiii. 36; Daniel iv. 5, 6, 15 (8, 9, 18), vii. 18, 22, 25, 27; Hosea xi. 12 (xii. 1); Malachi i. 6.

יָתֵרוֹן occurs nine times in Ecclesiastes, and nowhere else. The rendering THE EMINENT is by the substitution of the concrete in place of the abstract, a usual poetic license.

In the translation presented to the reader, the seventh verse comprehends the two first words of the eighth verse.

## CHAPTER V. VERSE 9.

הוּא is the reading of the Keri, and of eighteen of the MSS. collated by Kennicott. 'The word שְׂדֵה has no article, because אֲרִיץ has none, and both mean substantially the same thing.'—*Moses Stuart*.

'dignitatis seu pretii pro MAGIS QUAM, 1 Chron. v. 2, 1 Chron. xi. 21.'—*Noldii Conc. Heb. Part.*, p. 157.

## CHAPTER V. VERSE 12.

לְבַעַל is the reading of LXX., Syriac, and Vulgate.

## CHAPTER VI. VERSE 1.

חֹלָה is the reading of twenty-three MSS., some very ancient, and of two editions.



## CHAPTER VI. VERSE 12 AND VII. 14.

‘אחר post. Proprie SUBSECUTIO. Est nomen.’—Schultensii *Gram. Heb.*

## CHAPTER VII. VERSE 1.

A striking paronomasia.

## CHAPTER VII. VERSE 6.

A striking paronomasia.

## CHAPTER VII. VERSES 17, 18.

The translation DIE ETERNALLY is obtained by transferring the letter כ to the beginning of verse 18, and making verse 17 to terminate with בלאַ עת. As the most ancient manuscripts are not generally divided into words, both Kennicott and Horsley consider a division of letters into words different from the received text to be not only justifiable, but not even to amount to a different reading. I consider בלאַ עת employed to signify that the death against which Solomon warns the wicked man was not temporal but eternal death, not the separation of the soul from the body, but the condemnation both of soul and body to the second death, sempiternity of punishment for ever.

## CHAPTER VII. VERSE 25.

כלבי is the reading of eighty-five MSS., one edition, Chaldee, Vulgate, Symmachus, and of the Greek version published by Villosion.

## CHAPTER VIII. 1.

ישנה is the reading of fifteen MSS. of Kennicott, and of many MSS. of De Rossi, and of one edition, Chaldee, and Vulgate.

## CHAPTER VIII. 2.

The insertion of COUNSEL THEE in our authorized version is a violation of all propriety of language, and without any precedent in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is true that the formative ם is wanting in the Benoni participle שומר, but how often is the *mater lectionis* ם defective from the addition of the Hebrew punctuation ? שמר indeed, generally, drops ם in the Benoni participle. The Vulgate correctly renders : ‘Ego os regis observo.’

## CHAPTER VIII. 5 AND 6.

*A time of judgment*, by hendiadys (see Stuart’s *Hebrew Grammar*, pages 272 and 382). The literal rendering would be *a time and judgment*.

## CHAPTER IX. 2.

ולרע, AND TO THE EVIL, is sanctioned by all the ancient versions, but has not been found in any Hebrew MS. It is absolutely essential to the integrity of the text.

## CHAPTER IX. 9.

Seven Hebrew MSS., LXX., and Chaldec omit בל ימי הבלך, the insertion of which is an evident error of the scribes.

## CHAPTER IX. 18 AND XII. 1.

י Redundat. Non sunt pauca hæc redundantia.—Noldii *Con. Heb. Part.*

## CHAPTER X. 9.

ובוקע is the reading of seventy-five MSS. and of three editions of the fifteenth century.

## CHAPTER XI. 9.

*O thou that walkest.*—The Hebrew word הלך is rendered A TRAVELLER in 2 Samuel xii. 4, and would bear that acceptation if considered as the Benoni participle with the formative י defective, as it is defective in many Hebrew words, and is generally defective in the Benoni participle of הלך, or it may be so rendered with איש understood. The same meaning is obtained in either case. I consider the noun to be in the vocative case. This translation obviates all necessity of the supposition of irony, and makes a clear distinction between innocuous hilarity and devotion to the sinful impulses of the unregenerate heart. The unauthorized addition of ἀμωμος into the text by the LXX., closely followed by the Arabic, shows how clearly they discerned the difficulty, and how anxious they were to evade it.

## CHAPTER XII. 5.

יירא.—This verb is in the singular in five of Kennicott's Hebrew MSS., which the *exigentia loci* evidently requires.

## CHAPTER XII. 5.

נאץ signifies to DISGUST, to LOATHE, to REJECT, but never signifies to FLOURISH as rendered in our version.

## CHAPTER XII. 5.

יסתכל, *shall be loathsome.* Gesenius thus renders the passage: 'MOLESTA EST seni LOCUSTA, quia ægré ab illo manducatur et concoquitur, quanquam grati saporis.' (See his *Thesaurus linguae Hebrææ*, p. 444).

## CHAPTER XII. 6.

On the three last lines of this verse Dr. Mead thus comments:—'Tria, quæ concionem concludunt, incommoda revera sunt ænigmata, et Œdipi conjectoris indigent.' The translation of xii. 6 is from the pen of an eminent physician, conversant with Hebrew, and therefore well qualified both to interpret Solomon's enigmatical language, and to describe the bodily infirmities culminating in death figuratively signified thereby.

חבל—Societas hominum tanquam fune colligata.—Fuerstii *Conc. Heb.*

Funis, funiculus quo ligatur (ut Arab. Syr. Chald.)—Simonis *Lex. Heb.*

A cord or rope by which things are bound.—Parkhurst's *Heb. Lexicon.*

To bind as with a rope.—Lee's *Hebrew Lexicon.*

גלגל—Res volubilis, quæ continuo volvitur.—Simonis *Lex. Heb.*

Res volubilis, quæ cito et continuo volvitur.—Gesenii *Thesaurus Philologicus.*

Anything round, revolving.—Lee's *Hebrew Lexicon.*

Matter in circulation.—Bate's *Critica Hebræa.*

#### CHAPTER XII. 8.

The words VANITY OF VANITIES repeated in the second line is the reading of seven Hebrew MSS., and of the Syriac, and is essential to the parallelism of the stanza.

#### CHAPTER XII. 9.

ותקן is the reading of eleven MSS. and of one edition.

#### CHAPTER XII. 13.

The four last words of this verse have presented an insuperable difficulty to the authors of the ancient versions and to modern critics. The words are elliptical. The ellipses are natural, and when supplied, the meaning is clear and perspicuous. I supply סוף from the first hemistich, and ישמור from the second hemistich, and read  
 בי זה (סוף) כל האדם (ישמור).

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Kennicott, } their collations of Hebrew mss. *pas-*  
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